Double Agents

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Double Agents

Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe

Edited by

Marika Keblusek
and
Badeloch Vera Noldus

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On the cover: [*Detail of*] Thomas de Keyser, *Constantijn Huygens and his(?) Clerk*, 1627. Oil on panel, 92.4 × 69.3 cm. Courtesy National Gallery, London.

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Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Vera Noldus

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARAB	Algemeen Rijksarchief van België
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
ASV	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla
AGN.Mex.	Archivo General de la Nación México
AGP	Archivo General de Palacio
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
AHPM	Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional Madrid
BL	British Library
BL, Harl. MS	British Library, MS Harleian
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers Domestic*
CSPV	*Calendar of State Papers Venetian*
CJH	Consejos y Juntas de Hacienda
CG	Contadurías Generales
KBK	Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen
DTB	Doop-, trouw- en begrafenisregister
HAB	Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel
HMC	Historical Manuscript Commission
Inq.	Inquisición
MDP	Mediceo del Principato
NAK	National Archives, Kew
NASP	National Archives, Kew, State Papers
NAH	National Archives, The Hague
NLH	National Library, The Hague
n.d.	not dated
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OS	Old Style
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
RAK	Rigsarkivet, Copenhagen
RAS	Riksarkivet, Stockholm
s.l.	sine loco
SA	Stadsarchief Amsterdam
SANot	Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Notarieel archief
SAA	Stadsarchief Antwerpen
SAAIB	Stadsarchief Antwerpen, Insolvente Boedelkamer
SAAN	Stadsarchief Antwerpen, Notarieel Archief
SAAPK	Stadsarchief Antwerpen, Privilegekamer
TMC	Tribunal Mayor de Cuentas
UBL	University Library Leiden

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Painters' Materials to 1700 (2010); 'Art Collecting in Philip II's Spain: the Case of Gonzalo de Liaño, King's Dwarf and Gentleman of the Bedchamber', *The Burlington Magazine* 148 (2006) and 149 (2007) (with Salvador Salort Pons), and *Kunstwerke-Kunstwerte. Die Florentiner Maler der Renaissance und der Kunstmarkt ihrer Zeit* (2005).

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INTRODUCTION: DOUBLE AGENTS IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Marika Keblusek

In 1651, an anonymous 'authority' published a vicious attack on the late King Charles I of England. *The None-Such Charles His Character: Extracted, Out of Divers Originall Transactions, Dispatches and The Notes of Severall Publick Ministers, and Councellors of State As Wel[!] At Home As Abroad* claimed to enlighten its readers on the corrupt regime of the former monarch. Proof of these allegations was to be found in privileged intelligence 'Diurnalls' which had been discovered in the 'Paper Rooms' in Whitehall Palace.[1] Although its authorship has not been established beyond all doubt, the pamphlet has traditionally been attributed to Sir Balthazar Gerbier (1592–1663), one of those 'public ministers' the title referred to. If Gerbier was indeed its author (and style and specific references certainly suggest this), the pamphlet shows an almost schizophrenic 180-degree turn around, the author reinventing himself in the character of 'Sir Balthazar Gerbier', one of the many 'chameleon'-like agents once active for the defamed king.[2]

Gerbier's professional life up until 1650 had been firmly rooted in the Stuart court culture that he would denounce so vehemently after 1650. He was born in Middelburg in the Dutch Republic to parents of Huguenot refugee stock.[3] Trained as a calligrapher and engraver (Hendrik Goltzius may have been his tutor), Gerbier soon veered towards a political, rather than an artistic, career, applying his considerable talents as a miniaturist and draughtsman to win favor with high-ranking statesmen such as Prince Maurits of Orange.[4] Possibly following Maurits' instructions, in 1616 Gerbier accompanied the Dutch ambassador, Noël de Caron, to London where he used his knowledge

[1] Gerbier 1651b, p. 43.

[2] Gerbier 1651b, p. 46. See also p. 153, where Gerbier denounces another agent as 'a most malicious Camelian-like spirit of delusion'.

[3] For an overview of biographies of Gerbier, see Keblusek 2003 (and literature there cited); *ODNB*: Gerbier.

[4] Pen and ink drawings of Prince Maurits (1616, on horseback) and of the exiled Frederick, King of Bohemia (s.d.) are in the British Museum.

of art and expertise in penmanship, architecture and drawing to further his professional prospects.[5] Within a few years, he had managed to secure a post with George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, as curator of the ducal art collection in York House, which, under his supervision, expanded rapidly, before taking on additional responsibility for all kinds of administrative and political tasks.[6] In his several autobiographical accounts, Gerbier summed up his heterogeneous offices as the duke's cultural and political agent: 'In the first twelve years of my attendance, I was imployed in Messages to Forreigne princes abroad. And (…) I was made use of for my languages, my Pen, and knowledge in the other Sciences'. These included 'Mathematicks, Architecture, drawing, painting, contryving of scenes, Masques, shows and entertainment for greate Princes, besides many secrets which I had gathered from diverse rare persons'. Gerbier possibly acted as a spy on behalf of his patron, or at least thought of himself as one, as his almost obsessive emphasis on secrecy in his various testimonials seems to testify: 'I did keepe his Cifers with his intelligences abroade, was sent by him (with the king his Masters aprobation[!]) in secret Messages'.[7] His status as Buckingham's 'creature' quickly helped to establish Gerbier as an influential artistic and political advisor in court circles. He introduced his patron to Peter Paul Rubens, with whom, in years to come, he forged an informal partnership brokering diplomatic and artistic deals at the same time.[8] Confirmation of his reputation came in 1631, when King Charles acknowledged his diplomatic talents by promoting him to official resident in Brussels. By 1641, it would seem, Gerbier, now knighted and back in England as Master of Ceremonies to the king, had made it.

A decade later he denounced his former life as royal favorite by publishing the *None-Such Charles*, in addition to making plans and projects aimed at winning favor with the new Republican regime in England. These shifting sympathies did not make him popular among

---

[5] Caron's London cherry orchards were often visited by King James VI/I and Charles, Prince of Wales. It is quite possible that Gerbier was included in one of these informal gatherings: *ODNB*: Caron.

[6] Gerbier 1646, pp. 3–4: 'He [Buckingham] puts to me first, the contryvance of his habitations, to choose fore him rarities, bookes, medals, marble statues, and Pictures'.

[7] Gerbier 1651a, p. 7; Gerbier 1646, pp. 3–4.

[8] See chapter 8.

his contemporaries; indeed, many perceived them as proof of his fundamental untrustworthiness. Gerbier—as may have been suspected—clearly saw it differently: '[He] yields to nobody in the world in fidelity and disposition, which were born with him, and he has given signal proofs that in secrecy he yields to nobody in the world'.[9] The characterization of himself in the *None-Such Charles*, as well as that of the late king's other agents as unreliable 'Camelians', *i.e.* inconstant, fickle servants, of course served to persuade the new regime of his unfaltering loyalty. In fact, all his writings are, in one way or another, apologies in which he defends his character and actions against 'false' accusations, and time and again returns to *loyalty* as his most defining trait. Loyalty was part of his job, and so, by definition, he was loyal to any patron paying him to do that job. Thus, his use of the usually derogative term 'chameleon' should be understood as a more neutral way to categorize diplomatic officials and their shifting sympathies, responsibilities and activities.[10] Gerbier's 'volatile' behavior was a direct consequence of his profession as an agent, although it can justly be said that he was far more outspoken, extreme perhaps, in his volatility. Yet his versatility, his well-developed talent for seamlessly adapting to the demands of his patron *du jour*, is one of the defining characteristics of early modern agents in general.

Elsewhere, I have tried to typify the role and function of the agent, or broker.[11] The early modern system of brokerage as a widespread practice of transmission and dissemination of political, intellectual and cultural ideas has, in recent years, received some scholarly attention, notably in the context of patronage studies. Most of these, however, have zoomed in on the respective roles of patrons and clients in political or artistic relationships, leaving the intermediary broker (or agent) a blurry shape in the background. A shifting shape, also: I have argued that the term 'agent' should be interpreted as referring to a *function* rather than to a *profession*, even when contemporaries sometimes used

[9] Quoted in Keblusek 2003, p. 79.

[10] See *OED*: chameleon (fig.) = inconstant or variable person. Examples quoted from Thomas Dekker, *Seven Deadly Sinnes* (1606): 'The Politick Bankrupt is (…) a Cameleon, that can put himselfe into all colours' and John Bullokar, *The Englis[!] Expositor* (1616): 'Men that are inconstant and fickle are sometimes called Chameleons'.

[11] Keblusek 2006.

the term to identify a person's main employment.[12] Thus, in defining someone as an agent, it is to his characteristics and activities that we refer, to his particular role in a given relationship or at a given occasion, and these could change depending on patrons and clients.

The main precondition for an agent's success was his ability to construct and maintain networks, a theme recurring in all chapters of this book. The importance of personal networks in the early modern period has been particularly well established in recent scholarship on the intellectual community in which the mechanics of patronage, brokerage and clientelism are evident. The 'Republic of Letters', for example, has been described as a community based on obligation in which communal bonds were forged through service and agency and in which reciprocity and gratitude were crucial notions. In the international exchange of ideas, books and news, scholars made use of, indeed depended upon, fellow intellectuals and booksellers as intermediaries to introduce them to other scholars, to supply them with books, curiosities and art, or to negotiate dealings with editors and publishers; to act, in short, as brokers. The mechanisms of this type of exchange are studied in detail in Bianca Chen's account of the political and intellectual interests of Gisbert Cuper. He seems to have effortlessly switched between his political and scholarly networks, which at times overlapped and intersected.

However, the commercial aspects of brokerage—the *trade* in art and news and services—have mostly been overlooked in scholarship on agents and agency. Brokers have been defined as intermediaries in a negotiating role, whose actions were not compensated for in terms of money but rather in terms of personal advantages and reciprocity of services. Yet the contemporary philological meaning of the word 'broker'—a person who buys and sells goods on commission for someone else and makes money doing so—suggests an almost mercantile side to early modern brokerage and agency. Indeed, to be classified as a broker in this commercial sense of the word was felt by some intermediaries almost as an assault on their position. In a letter to his patron Henry, Baron of Arundell, the Jesuit priest John Thorpe made it quite clear that he did not want to be associated with those middle-

[12] Of course, in the burgeoning diplomatic profession, the term denoted a specific rank (as in 'Agent of Sweden'), but even then, the political agent's activities were intentionally uncircumscribed. See Wicquefort 1716, p. 39 on the oblique definition of the agent's status in the diplomatic hierarchy.

men who dirtied their hands by handling money because it might affect his relationship with his clients:

> I flatter myself that your Lordship has more regard for me or for the body to which I belong, than to have me marked out as a Broker of Pictures & Antiquities. The very drawing of Bills, or having my name noticed upon such papers, might be excused if I was some Procurator or other; but my present employ is here very different from such Agents, & it is not, I can assure Your Lordship, the most welcome recommendation of me to Painters & the like dealers in Roman Virtù.[13]

As I point out elsewhere in this book, ambassador Sir Thomas Roe was similarly adamant in his refusal to take any remuneration for his intermediary services. Other agents, however, such as Michel le Blon or Pieter Isaacsz in Badeloch Noldus' chapter, were paid explicitly for their intermediary services; in fact, le Blon had signed a contract detailing his salary and eventual gratuities. As Noldus shows, patrons were often painfully slow to remunerate le Blon. Likewise, the diplomat and book agent Abraham de Wicquefort had to beg the Duke of Wolfenbüttel over and over again to pay him 'by return of post' all outstanding salaries, as his poor family was dying of hunger. After months of polite, yet fruitless persistence, he had to turn to a higher authority: 'I have no other option (…)', he wrote, 'than to ask God, who is the judge of princes as well of lesser mortals, to avenge me for the extremities which I have suffered'.[14]

Abraham de Wicquefort's contract of 1648 did not stipulate any 'cultural' services, simply naming him as the political representative of the Wolfenbüttel court in Paris, yet he was implicitly expected to show himself to be a reliable and creative cultural broker on behalf of Duke August. The multiplicity of his responsibilities as an agent, and the fact that this was not an exceptional, but rather a typical situation, has been

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[13] Thorpe to Arundell, Rome, 6 June 1770. Sincere thanks to Peter Björn Kerber for supplying me with this quotation.

[14] Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel (HAB), Cod. Guelf. 102.2. Novi, f. 194r (30 November 1652): 'je n'ay autre chose a dire a VA sinon qu'elle me coupe la gorge, et qu'elle osse le pain de bouche de mes enfants en faisant renuoyer ma lettre de change de 488 Rthl auec protest. Je m'en plains a Dieu qui est juge des princes aussy bien que des moindres, qui me vengera de l'aextreme tost qui m'est fait. Non morabitur merces mercenarij tui apud se usque ad mane. Je pousse mes soupirs vers le ciel et lui demande la justice que les hommes me refusent. Ce n'est pas la le moien de me faire demeurer, Monseigneur de VA, votre tres-humble servant'. De Wicquefort's contract as ducal agent on ff. 4 and 7v–8r. See also chapter 5 for other examples.

the point of departure for the research project *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe*. This project, which was funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and facilitated by Leiden University, aims to explore early modern brokerage as a complex, coherent phenomenon.[15]

Agents from several different professional backgrounds—diplomats, scholars, artists, priests, booksellers and merchants—have, as I pointed out above, been examined before, but their interwoven activities have been studied mostly from a single, disciplinary perspective, focusing on one aspect of the fabric (for example, the agent's work as a political informer) and losing sight of the overall pattern (the intricacies between his political and cultural services). In doing so, the main characteristics of an early modern broker have gone unrecognized: his chameleon-like versatility, his flexibility in role-switching, his various uses of the same network—in short, the convergence of cultural, political and intellectual mediation in one figure. The 'Double Agents' project focused on two types of brokers: firstly, diplomats and other political representatives who, like de Wicquefort, were commissioned by their patrons to fulfill a variety of cultural services such as the purchase of books, paintings and curiosities or the head-hunting for musicians, painters or poets; secondly, artists and other cultural players who were enlisted as political agents (sometimes even as spies) to be involved in negotiations or communications of intelligence and, as such, played a distinctive role in the international politics of their time.

A number of questions needed to be considered in order to understand the general characteristics and dynamics of early modern brokerage. Who were these people, and what was their position, socially and economically? How did they obtain their position as cultural, intellectual and political representatives? What qualities—flexibility, social mobility, international connections—made them suitable for their offices? What exactly were their duties and how did they manage to execute them successfully? Were their political and cultural obligations equally important? What kind of political news did they report and what diplomatic responsibilities did they have? What kind of cultural products did they trade in, and did they compete with, or strengthen, the 'official' art trade? How did they co-operate with

[15] The project, under my supervision, included postdoctoral researchers Dr. Hans Cools and Dr. Badeloch Noldus, and ran from January 2002 until January 2007.

each other? Did they make use of the same accommodating networks of correspondents and agencies, such as merchants, booksellers, postmasters and couriers? To what extent did they use the same communication channels and routes for the distribution of political intelligence and cultural products and services?

The answers to these questions led to a profile of the early modern agent in a first volume of essays, *Your humble servant* (2006), an index not so much of professional characteristics and conditions, but rather of personal talents and qualities—mobility, organizational experience, command of languages, flexibility, networking capabilities and, last but not least, an appreciation of the value of expertise in art and politics.

What, then, of the original concept of 'double agency'?

I now believe this is a tautology of terms. *All* early modern agents—those involved in representation and mediation—were double agents by nature; triple or quadruple agents, even. The chapters making up this present volume (based on papers presented at the project's concluding conference in December 2006) all focus on individuals who, in the course of their careers, became involved in multiple modes of cultural and political transfer. We will follow ambassadors as art agents and military men as political agents (chapters by Robert Hill and Thomas Kirk), merchants as art brokers and collectors (chapters by Maartje van Gelder and Maurits Ebben) and painters, composers and court entertainers as political agents, even as spies (chapters by Badeloch Noldus, Peter Hauge and Susanna Kubersky-Piredda and Salvador Salort Pons). A final chapter on art agents in Rome (by Martin Dönike) suggests that by the end of the eighteenth century, a tendency to specialize in one's mediation services was emerging.

In three chapters, the hinges for this 'professionally' ordered triptych of diplomats, merchants and artists, I explore some crucial underlying concepts of early modern brokerage: the connection between diplomacy and art, the commercial side of brokerage, and the decisive part artistic professionals played in the world of informal diplomacy. First, I discuss the various ways in which diplomacy and art interrelated, for example the impact of art works on diplomatic discourse and negotiation. In addition, the connection between diplomacy and collecting, and its impact on the shaping of taste and connoisseurship will be explored (chapter one). Chapter five outlines the three levels on which merchants took part in the process of cultural agency as facilitators, brokers and collectors themselves. Finally, I attempt to explain why

professional involvement in the arts was consciously exploited as a cover for political activities, mainly by those in the grey area of intelligence services and espionage (chapter eight).

In the course of this book we see two significant themes unfold, which may be examined more elaborately in future research.

The sometimes unexpected meddling in art of certain agents (for example Daniel Nijs in Maartje van Gelder's chapter, or García de Yllán in the chapter by Maurits Ebben) can now be understood as a conscious strategy to expand their business to attract and keep patrons and clients. Their own art collections were essential agency tools used to forge an identity and reputation as connoisseurs which guaranteed their patrons a mutual platform for information exchange: all involved spoke the language of art. The importance of connoisseurship in diplomatic circles as a means of establishing a lasting relationship with a patron, to ensure oneself of favors, or to influence the shaping of taste in a social, political and geographic context is evident in Robert Hill's chapter.[16] How an agent could be caught up in the aesthetics of his time is made painfully clear in Martin Dönike's essay. Influential brokers were to define those aesthetics, and could make, or break, an artist. At the same time, being, literally, the middleman in the brokerage process could cause severe loyalty issues because one had to consider who to favor: one's patron or one's client.

Access and proximity are key notions in the early modern agency process, especially in a political context. Susanna Kubersky-Piredda and Salvador Salort Pons show how court entertainers such as Gonzalo de Liaño, a dwarf at the court of Philip II, operated in close proximity to the king and his ministers purely by definition of their office. From there, it was only a small step to become a trusted courtier invested with confidential charges. Similarly, highly valued court musicians such as John Dowland (see Peter Hauge's chapter) had ample opportunity to establish intimate contact with court officials which led to informal assignments in the political arena. Artistic expertise also allowed for freedom of movement and contacts in the otherwise strictly organized, highly hierarchical world of the court (see Michel le Blon's own analysis quoted in chapter eight). This structural, yet informal and thus less

[16] On the notion of connoisseurship as defining a social category, see Goldgar 2007; Ho 2009; Tummers/Jonckheere 2008.

visible role of artists, entertainers and musicians in the early modern world of diplomacy needs, I think, to be seriously considered. Abraham de Wicquefort drew on his own experience when he explicitly recognized the implications of *informal* diplomacy in his *L'Ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (1680): 'the greatest part of the most important Affairs have been transacted or prepar'd by unknown Persons'.[17]

In this book we present an international and interdisciplinary examination of early modern brokerage, a phenomenon which, as Thomas Kirk suggests elsewhere in this volume, should be understood as 'permeating early modern society, perhaps even the fundamental organizational principle of that society'.[18] It forms the conclusion of the 'Double Agents' project, which has, we hope, allowed the early modern agent to leave the shadowy wings and as a powerful actor enter the early modern European stage.

[17] Quoted from the English translation: Wicquefort 1716, p. 314. The author advised princes to 'make Choice of able Men, especially when they are to speak, or give Advice by Word of Mouth', as an unidentified footman 'with no Credentialls' who was chosen to deliver an important message to the Duke of Burgund 'in the Fields' (p. 315).

[18] Although we have tried to include most (geographic) parts of Europe, unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances, some countries and regions have been treated rather marginally in this book, notably France. However, the general observations on agency would not, we think, have altered much had work on French agents been included.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EMBASSY OF ART: DIPLOMATS AS CULTURAL BROKERS

Marika Keblusek

In December 1621, Sir Thomas Roe and his family arrived in Constantinople, having set sail from England in October and stopped in Messina and Zante on the way. Newly appointed ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Roe did not forget the promises he had made to his patrons and friends back home: 'But now I desire only to giue your lordship an accompt of the care I haue of your lordships commands', he assured Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, on 27 January 1621 [=1622]. These commands, Roe realized full well, would force him 'to look back upon antiquity', even 'though my imployment bee the other end of the circle, to attend new things'.[1]

Roe's first responsibility during his Constantinople residency, which would last until 1628, was to take care of 'new things'—to engage in current and future political and commercial events and developments. Yet almost as important, albeit informally, were his activities as a cultural intermediary, collecting, on a large scale, antiquities for Arundel and some time later for Arundel's political arch-rival George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.[2] Because of his friendship with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Roe was able to bring together a collection of early Christian Greek manuscripts, which he discussed in a series of letters to William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sir Isaac Wake,

[1] Roe 1740, p. 16: Roe to Arundel, 27 January 1621 [=1622]. On Roe's activities for Arundel see also Howarth 1985, pp. 87–95. For a biography of Roe see Strachan 1989 and Strachan's essay on Roe in *ODNB*.

[2] Antiquities for Arundel: Roe 1740, p. 154: Roe to Arundel, 1/10 May 1623; pp. 334–345: Roe to Arundel, 22 January 1624[=1625]; pp. 386–387: Roe to Arundel, 1/10 May 1625 and pp. 444–445: Roe to Arundel, 10/20 May 1625. Antiquities for Buckingham: Roe 1740, p. 511: Roe to Buckingham, 1/10 May 1626; p. 534: Buckingham to Roe, 19 July 1626 OS; p. 570: Roe to Buckingham, 1/11 November 1626; p. 619: Roe to Buckingham, n.d.; p. 647: Roe to Buckingham, 19/29 May 1627; p. 692: Roe to Buckingham, 18 October 1627; p. 764: 22 February 1627 [=1628] OS; p. 818: Roe to Buckingham, 27 June 1628. See also Lapierre 2004, pp. 462–484 and Springell 1963.

secretary of Ambassador Dudley Carleton at The Hague.[3] Acting as an intermediary on behalf of the patriarch, Roe presented the *Codex Alexandrinus* to King Charles I after his return to England.[4] Also, Roe sought out highly valuable diamonds which he sold on to the king, sent the Queen of Bohemia various bezoar stones and, on a large scale, collected ancient medals and coins which were later, together with the manuscripts, presented to the Bodleian Library.[5]

Roe's letter to Arundel of January 1622 shows the width of the ambassador's activities as a cultural broker and reveals much about the logistics of these 'secondary' activities. Finding himself in unfamiliar territory, he needed contacts to point out to him where to locate the manuscripts and antiquities he was looking for on behalf of his patrons. There was the Bishop of Andre, 'a man of good learning, and greate experience in these parts', whom Roe had brought with him from Messina. He had assured the ambassador that 'the search after old and good authors was vtterly vaine, that neither in Greece, nor in any other place subiect to the Grand Signor, were left so much as the footstepps or ruines of any antient learning'.[6] Roe had also contacted the French ambassador in Constantinople, who had had 'the last gleanings', and who had told him of the existence of 'an old Tertullian, and a piece of Chrisostome in manuscript' of which perhaps copies might be found. As for antiquities in marble, Roe had been informed that there were many still to be dug up and he would order it done 'as soone as I am warme here'. He had made inquiries about coins and medals which were sold 'very deare', by Jewish merchants; two would be delivered to

[3] Roe 1740, p. 414: Roe to Laud, [30 June]1625 OS; p. 618: Roe to Laud, 17/27 February 1626 [=1627]; p. 765: Roe to Wake, 22 February 1627 [=1628], OS.

[4] After his embassy to India, Roe had returned with several exotic presents for King James I in 1619: 'two antelopes, a strange and beautiful kind of red deer, a rich tent, rare carpets, certain umbrellas and such like trinkets from the Great Mogul'. Letter from Chamberlain to Carleton, 2 October 1619, cited in Hervey 1921/1969, p. 164.

[5] On the diamond: Roe 1740, p. 27: Roe to Arundel, 9/19 May 1621; p. 54: Roe to Arundel, 31 May 1622; pp. 107–108: Roe to Arundel, 30 November 1622. On the bezoar stones: Roe 1740, pp. 312–313: Roe to Elizabeth of Bohemia, 27 November 1624; p. 354: Roe to Elizabeth of Bohemia, 20 February 1624[=1625] OS; p. 297: Elizabeth of Bohemia to Roe, 26 July 1625. For the importance and status of bezoar stones in royal collections see Pérez de Rudela/Gschwend 2001, pp. 14–15. On the coins and medals see Roe 1740, pp. 583–584: Roe to the Countess of Bedford, 9/19 December 1626.

[6] In a letter to Arundel, 22 January 1624 [=1625], Roe insisted that 'bookes haue been so often visited, that I thincke Duck-lane is better furnished then the Greeke church': Roe 1740, p. 334.

Arundel via one Anthony Wood, captain of an English vessel, 'the one gold, is of Alexander; the other is brasse, and very antient, of a queen of Seruia, with hieroglyphicks now unknowne'.

Other letters, first to Arundel and, from 1626 onwards, to Buckingham, testify to the system of 'subagents' which Roe had set up to help him find the antiquities his patrons coveted. 'My agents from Greece are retorned[*sic*] with no great fruit of their labours' confessed Roe to Buckingham in May 1626, but a year later he was able to report that 'from many other places, and sundrye agents, I expect diuers others[*sic*] things'. Whether they would send things of quality, Roe could not be sure: '[one] must be contented to take bad with good, from those that, hauing no skill, yet spend my money to employ themselues'.[7] In January 1627, he sent one of his servants on a long tour of the Greek mainland and islands in order to locate marble statues and other ancient works of art for Buckingham. The tour was highly successful, Roe's 'agent' having 'bought many pieces that he could not prouide suddenly to carry away' and which he had 'buried (…) in the sand, or left with Greekes untill his return to make his full collection'. Unfortunately, only four pieces were eventually shipped off, due to the servant's sudden death in Patras; the reconstruction of his purchases and the recovery of 'many other things scattered here and there, according to such notes as he left', or had formerly sent Roe, must be considered 'a new worke'.

Occasionally, Roe collaborated with agents working for other collectors, such as William Petty, Arundel's trusted antiquity scout abroad.[8] These alliances, however, quickly culminated into rivalry, Roe openly doubting in his epistles to Buckingham the quality of Petty's archeological finds and of his artistic judgment. Thus, Roe could excuse the low quantity of his own shipments to Buckingham, as well as assure him that only the rarest and most valuable pieces would end up in his possession and not in Arundel's cabinets. Similarly, rivalry was a key issue in the sale of a valuable diamond to King Charles I in 1621. In his letters to Arundel, who in turn took on the role of an intermediary broker, Roe referred to the diamonds offered to the king by Sir Paul Pindar, his predecessor in Constantinople, where Pindar had been ambassador from 1611 to 1620. Although, as he insisted, he 'would

[7] Roe 1740, p. 647: Roe to Buckingham, 19/29 May 1627.
[8] On Petty as an agent: Howarth 1985; Lapierre 2004.

not by this motion hurt' Pindar, whose diamond had been described as 'a stone rare in perfection, fit for a great prince', Roe's own stone far exceeded it in beauty and value, 'being twice the weight of sir Paul Pindurs'. In fact, Roe had only seen a model, for the stone itself was kept 'the greatest secret of this court', but he trusted the jewelers who kept him informed. In further letters on the financial aspects of the possible sale—tellingly in code—he also stressed his own expertise in judging the diamond's value.[9]

Locating and purchasing works of art, antiquities and jewels was only part of Roe's job as cultural intermediary. Taking care of the logistics—payment and shipment most importantly—was another, his correspondence offering some insights into these activities. The transport of antiquities in particular was not without risk—'the difficultye of carriage, and engines, and expence, (…) great, and the danger among these remote habitations greater, some stones weighing aboue 20 hundred, and brought by hand to the water'.[10] Just before his departure for England in 1628, Roe managed to ship to Buckingham the marble statues he had purchased for him: 'I am now collecting and lading the few marbles I have found for your grace. Some are to be shipt from Patrass: other I attend from Zea and the islands,' he wrote from Smyrna.[11]

All these things—the hiring of subagents, the purchase of marbles, jewels, bezoars, manuscripts and other commodities, their transport and final shipment—cost large sums of money, which had to be advanced by Roe. At the beginning of his embassy he complained to Secretary Calvert about his financial distress, not having received a pension from the king.[12] Roe touches upon financial arrangements in some of his letters, yet always treads a careful path in assuring his patrons that their protection and service is all he wants in return. Describing the difficulties in transporting antique marbles, he assured Buckingham that 'your grace shall haue no cause to repent the charge', which suggests reimbursement at a later stage. Yet payment for his services as a cultural broker was not something Roe seems always to have expected or even appreciated, as it degraded, perhaps, the honor

[9] Roe 1740, p. 107: Roe to Arundel, 30 November 1622.
[10] Roe 1740, p. 647: Roe to Buckingham, 19/29 May 1627.
[11] Roe 1740, p. 818: Roe to Buckingham, 27 June 1628.
[12] Roe 1740, p. 53: Roe to Calvert, 30 May 1622.

of serving his patrons. Upon sending the Queen of Bohemia, by way of his wife, a collection of bezoar stones, Roe explicitly stated he did not want to be rewarded for his 'gift': 'when you promise to pay mee mony, you diminish mee, and hold mee at a low price'.[13] However, for his servant who had traveled the whole of Greece looking for marbles, the ambassador tried to arrange an appointment (as an independent agent?) in Buckingham's service: 'accept my poore man, who hath vndergone infinite paynes and perill, and is now well practised both in the countrye and with the inhabitants, and hath sufficient language, and indefatigable industrye, for this employment (…). His hopes are, that seeing I cannot reward him, that your grace, which is his ambition, will take him for your seruant'.[14]

Although Sir Thomas Roe seems to have felt—as his letter to Arundel testifies—that there was a distinction between activities that would take him either into the domain of antiquity or of 'new things', his cultural role was nevertheless a typical one for someone in his position. Roe's double agency as both a political and cultural broker is by no means exceptional, and his multidimensional career as diplomat and cultural broker is mirrored in the careers of many of his contemporaries. Indeed, the early modern diplomat's complex and heterogeneous set of responsibilities, assignments and activities—his *negozio*—has been shown to be the rule rather than the exception.[15]

Evidence suggests that cultural assignments had been an informal but fixed part of the ambassador's tasks since the late Middle Ages.[16] An Italian invention, the profession of resident ambassador was traditionally practiced by men of letters, men deeply steeped in humanist traditions. It should be kept in mind that ambassadors, residents and political agents did not form a 'restricted professional class, devoted to diplomatic careers'.[17] They were recruited from the ranks of scholars, clergymen, physicians, lawyers and secretaries and consequentially

[13] Roe 1740, p. 312: Roe to Elizabeth of Bohemia, 27 November 1624.
[14] Roe 1740, p. 647: Roe to Buckingham, 19/29 May 1627.
[15] See also Frigo 2008, esp. p. 21 on this multi-faceted *negozio*.
[16] Tourtier 1957, p. 330, shows for example that the acquisition of luxury saddles and horses was part of a fourteenth-century Mantuan diplomat's tasks. See also Frigo 2008.
[17] Mattingly 1988, p. 100.

brought with them expertise and contacts from their previous professional milieu.[18]

Contemporary theorists on the 'perfect ambassador' all confirm the most important qualities as being eloquence and learnedness. Ideally possessing 'boundless' knowledge of all conceivable things, a diplomat must be supremely well read, primarily in history and law. He should have a good command of foreign languages, and be able to speak at length, yet, equally important, he should at no point be carried away by his own words. A good-looking man, preferably with an aristocratic background, he should not be so old that health issues might hinder him, nor so young as to appear immature.[19] An ambassador's residence should at all costs reflect the pomp and status of his prince, exhibiting rich furnishings, tapestries, works of art and silver and gilt plate.[20] Sometimes these had been procured as payment for services rendered, such as the paintings the Gonzaga princes bestowed on their representatives.[21] And, as we will see, some diplomats were avid collectors themselves.[22]

The intricate and multifaceted interaction between diplomacy and art in the Renaissance and early modern period has been the focus of several studies in recent years.[23] Art has been recognized as an important diplomatic device and in that context has even been dubbed a 'mute diplomat'.[24] The phrase 'cultural diplomacy' has been used to refer to the various ways in which works of art influence the diplomatic process, in particular when presented as gifts, representing both material and social value.[25] The exchange of gifts—works of art, luxury items,

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[18] Biow 2002, p. 15; Dibben 1910; Jusserand 1922, p. 431, on famous poets and humanists as diplomats; Queller 1967, pp. 154–155: 'Secretaries were educated, trusted, dependent upon the state for their careers and, through their familiarity with the principal's correspondence, apt to be possessed of an unusual background in the matters under concern'.

[19] These qualities and characteristics are outlined in treatises such as Hotman de Villiers 1603; Howell 1664 and esp. Wicquefort 1681, vol. 1, p. 168. See also Jusserand 1922. On the depiction of diplomacy in early modern literature: Hampton 2006 and 2009.

[20] Examples in Jacobsen 2007.

[21] Luzio 1922, vol. 2, p. 82.

[22] Bély 1990, pp. 338–340 briefly mentions diplomats as patrons of the art.

[23] Several aspects of this relationship are explored in Brantl 1998. I thank Rebecca Tucker for providing me with a copy of this text.

[24] Colantuono 2000.

[25] Cropper 2000, pp. 14–15; Elam 1993, p. 814. See also Cutler 2008 for gift exchange in early modern Islamic diplomatic culture. On the culture of gift-giving from a more general perspective: Groebner 2002; Zemon Davis 2000.

and animals—was an important means of strengthening and nurturing family ties between European courts. Catherina of Austria, Queen of Portugal, for example, regularly sent her ambassador in Madrid lists of Habsburg relatives to visit and, on those occasions, requested him to bestow on them greetings and gifts. In the mid-sixteenth century, the imperial menagerie in Austria was filled largely with animals sent on behalf of the Spanish court from Africa, Asia and the Americas. The most popular gifts exchanged between Habsburg princes, however, were portraits of family members and their children.[26]

Gifts of art, particularly paintings, further provided inspiration for political discourse and negotiation, suggesting in their depicted subjects analogies to current political developments and being understood as exempla of visual rhetoric by their viewers.[27] When the Medici family sought to cement ties with Philip II, King of Spain, by means of diplomatic gifts, they sent a trusted agent to deliver several paintings. These were not only extremely valuable, reflecting the Medici's respect, but their subject matter obliquely referred to political events at hand.[28] Similarly, gifts that were sent by the princes of Brandenburg to other European sovereigns were often highly personalized—for example by including coats of arms of the recipient—and politically charged, whether through their specific iconography or the context in which they were presented.[29]

Contemporary theoretical treatises and practical handbooks advised diplomats to make use of rhetorical references to ancient and modern history in their orations. Works of art, especially those that were presented in a diplomatic context, could then perform an illustrative function, being explicitly drawn, for example, into the ambassador's speech.[30] Thus, a painting could inspire a politically charged conversation, which 'act of speaking about the painting, the act of incorporating its conceits into a living diplomatic discourse (…) ultimately completes the diplomatic artwork and renders it "significant" '.[31] Paintings were sometimes specifically produced to be used within the diplomatic

[26] Pérez de Tudela/Gschwend 2001, pp. 5 and 17–18; passim for many more examples of exotic gifts.
[27] Examples in Cox-Rearick 1994; Goldberg 1996.
[28] See Goldberg 1996 and Salort/Kubersky 2006.
[29] See Falcke 2006.
[30] Colantuono 2000, pp. 62–63, referring to theorists such as Alberico Gentili, and his *De legationibus* (1585). See also Brantl 1998, Cropper 2000 and Elam 1993.
[31] Colantuono 2000, p. 67; see also Colantuono 1979, pp. 178–179.

discourse; also, images in various forms directly resulted from ambassadorial practice, being commissioned by the diplomats themselves.[32]

Portraits, in particular, were staple fare of diplomatic negotiations, ambassadors and other representatives conveying likenesses of potential royal spouses and of their sovereigns and patrons.[33] Diplomats displayed portraits of monarchs and princes in their foreign residencies and halls of state, where these images functioned as representations of the actual presence of the sovereign during ambassadorial ceremonies.[34] According to early eighteenth-century diplomatic theory, besides the obligatory official letters of credit, every ambassador and resident should own a portrait of his prince or delegator.[35] Similarly, diplomats carried portraits of their sovereigns with them on their travels. In 1636, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, embarked on a mission to Vienna in order to persuade Emperor Rudolf II to allow the succession of Charles Louis as Elector Palatine. One of Arundel's stops was in Augsburg where he visited the art and curiosity cabinet of Philipp Hainhofer, a famous merchant-diplomat and art agent. Hainhofer noted, in a letter to his patron August, Duke of Wolfenbüttel, that Arundel carried with him several portraits of Elizabeth of Bohemia, her late husband and the Palatine princes, as well as images of himself, his wife and his son.[36]

In the political and dynastic schemes of European courts, portraits were vital in forging bonds and alliances. In the context of marriage negotiations especially, artists and diplomats frequently worked closely together, and sometimes their distinctive functions were embodied in

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[32] Brantl 1998, esp. chapter 5.

[33] On the use of portraits in early modern marriage negotiations: Winkler 1993, chapter 2: 'Der Bildnisgebrauch bei Vermählungsprojekten'. Other examples in Edelmayer 1997, p. 240: Adam von Dietrichstein to Maximilian II, 4 July 1564 (consignment of portraits of Don Carlos and King Sebastian of Portugal; request for delivery of other portraits); p. 287, Maximilian II to Dietrichstein, 24 October 1564 (satisfaction with the supplied portrait of Don Carlos); p. 358: Maximilian II to Dietrichstein, 19 March 1565 (promise of his portrait); p. 390: Dietrichstein to Maximilian II, 4/6 June 1595 (request for Maximilian's portrait); p. 487, Maximilian II to Dietrichstein, 25 December 1595 (portrait has been sent).

[34] Winkler 1993, chapter 3: 'Das Bildnis des souveränen Fürsten im Gesandschaftswesen'.

[35] Winkler 1993, p. 156.

[36] Gobiet 1984, nr 1187, p. 625: Hainhofer to Duke August, 28 July/7 August 1636. Hervey 1921/1969, p. 378 mentions the Augsburg visit without a reference to Hainhofer.

one person.[37] Thus, albeit on an incidental scale, artists could come to assume a diplomatic role, particularly in the days prior to the establishment of official diplomacy.[38] In 1428, for example, Philip the Good of Burgundy sent the painter Jan van Eyck to Portugal in order to produce two portraits of his future bride Isabella. In 1528, Hans Holbein painted Henry VIII's potential future spouse Christina of Denmark. Emperor Rudolf II received a portrait of the Spanish princess Isabella Clara Eugenia via his ambassador and agent, Hans von Khevenhüller, in 1586.[39]

Traveling in the ambassadorial entourage, artists were employed to produce visual reports on surroundings, people and places which served as counterparts to the textual reports conceived by the diplomats.[40] Between 1555 and 1559, the painter Melchior Lorck traveled as official member of the imperial embassy to the court of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. The embassy, led by Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, is a prime example of cultural transfer through diplomatic channels. Busbecq's dispatches were brimming with all kinds of knowledge about Turkey, while Lorck documented everything he encountered in a series of depictions of Turkish, Byzantine and Roman buildings and monuments and portraits of Turkish people.[41] Similarly, the embassies to Persia undertaken on behalf of the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein by the scholar Adam Olearius between 1634–1639 resulted in a spectacularly popular, richly illustrated travel account, the *Offt begehrte Beschreibung der neuen Orientalischen Reise (…) an den Konig in Persien geschehen* (1647 and many later editions). The multi-talented Olearius, attached as secretary to these diplomatic missions, not only composed the text but also executed nearly eighty drawings on every aspect of Persian life and culture. In his later life, Olearius' expertise in and first-hand experience with diplomacy and the role of collecting

[37] See Martin 2008 on marriage diplomacy in medieval Muscovy.

[38] See also chapter 8 in this volume.

[39] See Warnke 1985, pp. 280–283, for several other examples of visual marriage diplomacy.

[40] Colantuono 2000, p. 73. Examples of visual reports in the form of topographical drawings: Brantl 1998, pp. 218–220. Elam 1988, p. 816, however, is not convinced of the importance of art in a diplomatic context, which she merely calls a 'public sweetener, the icing on the diplomatic cake'.

[41] Fischer 2009; Martels 1989.

in politics of the court, cemented his future career as librarian and collection manager for the Schleswig-Holstein princes.[42]

Works of art, including medals, were commissioned by diplomats to commemorate royal entries, peace negotiations or signing of treaties and would later serve to revive memories of the witnessed event.[43] The conclusion of the Somerset House meetings in 1604 between delegates of Spain and England was painted later by Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, King Philip II's official court painter; Cruz was probably commissioned by one of the Spanish diplomats who had been present.[44] In 1648, several artists, including Gerard ter Borch, were invited by the city council of Münster and possibly by Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange, to produce portraits of diplomatic protagonists negotiating the Peace of Westphalia.[45]

As the case of Sir Thomas Roe shows, the search for, and trade in cultural artifacts frequently formed an integral part of diplomatic activities. In recent years, art historians, in particular those working on early Stuart England, have pointed out the instrumental role of ambassadors and their agents in the building of art collections.[46] Often avid collectors themselves, diplomats such as Sir Henry Wotton, Sir Dudley Carleton, Basil Fielding, Earl of Denbigh, and Sir William Trumbull made good use of their official residencies in the Italian states and the Dutch Republic to scout for pictures and artists their patrons might be interested in. However valuable and innovative, these studies have concentrated mainly on English collections of art and antiquities. They have justly asserted the role of the ambassador as an important cultural broker, yet because of their focus on high-ranking officials within the diplomatic realm, these studies fail to take into account the systematic involvement of lower level political representatives in the process of

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[42] Olearius 1647, 1656 and 1986. Interestingly, the French translation was executed by Abraham de Wicquefort. On Olearius: Baron 1967; Behzad 1970; Brancaforte 2003.

[43] More examples in Brantl 1998, pp. 189–189, who classifies these types of pictorial commemorations as 'records of the moment pre-photography'. Colantuono 2000, p. 68 on works of art as 'mnemonic aid'. On medals: Scher 1994; Winkler 1993.

[44] Brown 2002, cat. nr. 1; Hearn 2004. See also chapter 8 in this volume.

[45] Israel 1997, p. 95.

[46] Most importantly Hill 1999; Hill 2003; Howarth 1994. Howarth 1997, p. 240, argued for a 'broad and generous study of the cultural role of the English ambassador in early modern Britain'. Although this study still remains to be written, work on individual representatives as well as on individual patrons has been carried out, most recently in Chaney 2003. See also Peck 2005, pp. 174–175.

cultural brokerage. It has been pointed out that there was a distinction between the ambassadors who 'fixed the deals [but] did not personally attend sales or go into the studio' on the one hand, and the networks of secretaries, art dealers and agents on whom they depended on the other, a distinction which can be seen as both hierarchical and practical.[47] Yet this distinction may have been less clearly defined than has been hitherto assumed. The agent and connoisseur George Gage, to give but one example, acted as an art buyer on behalf of the English ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton, and clearly belonged to the ambassador's supporting, secondary network of art dealers. He also carried out secret missions on behalf of King James I, thus donning, however occasionally, a diplomatic cloak.[48]

Continental princes similarly exploited their diplomatic servants to enlarge their collections. Sent on a political mission to Venice by Queen Christina of Sweden in 1649, the diplomat-scholar Mathias Palbitzki was specifically commissioned by her to buy antique statues and contemporary casts.[49] Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin dispatched their representatives to all corners of Europe, expecting both political and artistic information and services.[50] As Mazarin's 'lackey' in England, Antoine Bordeaux purchased several artworks from the collection of the late King Charles I, including Corregio's *Venus with Satyr and Cupid*, for which he paid £4,300. Competition was fierce: the Spanish ambassador Alonso de Cárdenas was trying to buy as many masterpieces as he could lay his hands on for his patron Don Luis de Haro.[51] Scouting talent obviously was another artistic feat with which ambitious diplomats could impress their patrons. The poet-diplomat Theodoor Rodenburg tried to accommodate the Danish king, Christian IV, by recommending to him possible painters and sculptors (as well as a French tutor).[52] His friend and fellow-broker Michel le Blon pointed out the sculptor Artus Quellinus to Constantijn Huygens

[47] Howarth 1997, p. 244.
[48] Barnes 1993.
[49] Granberg 1929–1931, vol. 1, pp. 73–74. See also Brantl 1998, pp. 84–85.
[50] Michel 1999; Pas de Sécheval 1993 (on Mazarin). For Richelieu's main agent, jeweler-merchant Anthony Lopez: Baraude 1933.
[51] Much has been written about the so-called 'sale of the century', most recently in Brotton 2006. For Bordeaux' actions see pp. 288–306.
[52] Kernkamp 1902. For Rodenburg as an agent, see chapter 9 and literature there cited.

in 1646, who, as secretary to the Prince of Orange, in turn brokered high-end commissions for artists.[53]

When assessing the construction of collections, it is therefore important to understand the influential role of these brokers in the shaping and influencing of taste. As cultural advisors and agents, they were often instrumental in the selection and acquisition process, thus masterminding collection policies for less artistically experienced patrons. (The art agents of notable connoisseur-collectors such as the Earl of Arundel or the Duke of Wolfenbüttel were by contrast often nothing more than shopping assistants.)[54] The arrival of the English ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton in The Hague in 1618, for example, sparked an interest in Roman sculpture among artists and collectors in the Dutch Republic. His outstanding collection of statues, including eighteen busts of Roman emperors which he had purchased in Italy, was greatly admired, in particular by painters.[55]

Most scholars have looked exclusively at the ambassador's cultural involvement in regard to his efforts to secure works of art for his patrons and to broker deals with artists. The activities of ambassadors as cultural middlemen, however, were by no means limited to the quest for works of art. Research on diplomatic couriers *en route* to England, Germany, France and Spain has shown that they carried in their bags not only letters and documents, but books, textiles, perfume, victuals, diamonds and even marble samples.[56] Some diplomats seem to have specialized in the search for, and purchase of, specific items. Abraham de Wicquefort, resident in Paris for the Elector of Brandenburg and the Duke of Wolfenbüttel and the author of one of the most influential treatises on ambassadorship, catered to his patrons almost exclusively in bibliophile matters. An enthusiastic book collector himself, de Wicquefort roamed the Parisian bookshops for any possible title they might be interested in.[57] Undoubtedly, the purely bibliographic nature of his assignments for August of Wolfenbüttel was due to the duke's obsessive interest in building the largest library in Europe, but

[53] Worp 1911–1917, vol. 4, p. 276 (nr 4259), 27 January 1646. Original in UB Leiden, HUG 37.

[54] See examples in chapter 5.

[55] According to a letter of 23 May 1613, paraphrased in Gelder/Jost 1985, p. 36. Part of Carleton's collection was exchanged for paintings by and from Rubens, in 1618.

[56] Examples in Allen 1972a and 1972b, pp. 33–37.

[57] His own library of some 1,350 titles was auctioned off in 1677: *Catalogus* 1677.

it is clear that de Wicquefort's expertise and contacts in the world of books was an important reason for other patrons to take an interest in him.[58]

Studies of the infrastructure of Emperor Maximilian II's diplomatic representation in Spain have shown the heterogeneity of his delegates' assignments, ranging from the supply of political information to the purchase of natural and artificial curiosities and luxury commodities. In the 1560s and 1570s, Adam von Dietrichstein, Maximilian's Spanish ambassador, purchased and dispatched on behalf of his patron not only paintings and sculpture, but horses and luxury items as well.[59] His colleague Hans Khevenhüller sent Maximilian fruit seeds for the imperial botanical garden and lions for the Viennese menagerie.[60] Gifts in all forms exchanged between the Tuscan court of Ferdinando I de' Medici and the Habsburg court in Spain were often handled by the imperial ambassador Khevenhüller, who embarked on some private trading as well; in 1589, he tried to sell diamonds and jewels to the Florentine Grand Duke. Ferdinando I at first declined the offer, stating that enough jewels were to be found in Italy, but, since Khevenhüller had already dispatched them from Spain, the Grand Duke volunteered to find other interested parties and offered to buy some of them in exchange for gold cloth or other goods from Florence, thus becoming a cultural broker himself.[61]

Similarly, in order to supplement his salary, Count de Linhares, Portuguese Viceroy in Goa from 1629 to 1635, traded spices, horses, diamonds, bezoars and other valuable luxury products, which he acquired through his personal network of agents. (Linhares sent one of them, the goldsmith Vicente Ribeiro, as his political informer on diplomatic travels to the interior territories). In 1633, Linhares dispatched a 'bureau with its drawers filled with fine pieces of crystal decorated with gold and rubies, eaglewood rosaries, and other valuables' to the highly influential Diogo Soares, secretary to the Council

[58] See also chapter 5 on Abraham's brother Joachim de Wicquefort. I am working on a double biography of the Wicquefort brothers as cultural and political brokers.

[59] Strohmeyer 1997, p. 94 and passim. On Dietrichstein: Edelmayer 1992.

[60] Herrnleben 1992, p. 105.

[61] Medici Archive Project (www.documents.medici.org): Giulio Battaglini to Ferdinando I de' Medici, 11 March 1589 (MdP 4919, f. 772). This database offers numerous other examples of diplomats involved in the systematic exchange and distribution of art and luxury items. For Khevenhüller's activities see Pérez de Tudela/Gschwend 2001.

of Portugal in Madrid, a diplomatic gift to ensure his political position upon return from Goa. Underlining the gesture in a more informal way, Linhares' wife presented crystals, Indian bedspreads and folding screens, as well as a female slave—'renowned for her culinary skills'—to Soares' wife.[62]

The purchase and distribution of art, books and luxury items, then, whether in the form of orders placed, diplomatic gifts, or tradable commodities, was an unofficial yet integral part of early modern diplomacy.[63] It has been asserted that because of irregularity and instability in the newly developing market for valuable luxury items (in particular exotica) in the sixteenth century, a systematic trade with merchants functioning as the main purveyors of these items could not yet exist. Distribution, therefore, depended on a heterogeneous community of dealers: scholars, librarians, merchants, antiquarians, craftsmen and possibly most prominently, diplomats. Because of their mobility, their connection to existing international trade routes, their exclusive ties and access to courts, and their personal (postal) networks, diplomats seem to have formed the most obvious group to undertake the trade in luxury items.[64] In fact, some historians assert that the establishment and institutionalization of economic routes and networks could only be safely realized due to this diplomatic framework. Diplomacy came to be the 'only available instrument to build a comprehensive organization level, providing the physical, legal and symbolic infrastructures needed for the economic relationship between two or more partners (…). Diplomacy was actually the means through which networks became more or less institutionalized'.[65]

In the political reality of the early modern period, knowledge of works of art, as well as personal acquaintance with artists and dealers, could prove a valuable currency in the process of consolidating or advancing one's position.[66] The ambassador's ability to successfully negotiate as an art agent between patron and artist, his own connoisseurship, and his contacts in the world of art were powerful commodities in the

[62] Disney 1991, pp. 430–442.
[63] For examples see Pieper 1999, pp. 215–224; Stieglecker 1999, pp. 225–245; Strohmeyer 1997, pp. 94–95.
[64] Pieper 1999, pp. 215–216.
[65] Pereira Antunes 2004, pp. 141–142 and 181.
[66] Hill 1999 and 2003; Howarth 1997, p. 240. But compare Smith 1996.

patronage system. The early modern diplomats' activities as cultural entrepreneurs should thus be looked at in the much wider context of cultural transfer—as distributors not only of cultural artifacts and products throughout Europe, but of people, ideas and taste as well. Ambassadors were vital agents in the migration of ideas and content in early modern Europe, and beyond; thus, as some scholars have emphasized, diplomatic history should ultimately be understood as cultural history.[67]

[67] Notably Droste 2006a; Rohrschneider/Strohmeyer 2007; Watkins 2008.

CHAPTER TWO

ART AND PATRONAGE: SIR HENRY WOTTON AND THE VENETIAN EMBASSY 1604–1624

Robert Hill

The significant role played by Sir Henry Wotton in the development of art collecting at the early Stuart court has long been recognized by specialists in the field.[1] Nevertheless, there has been no detailed modern assessment of his role in spreading an appreciation of Venetian art resulting from his three embassies to the Serene Republic 1604–1610, 1616–1619 and 1621–1623.[2] As an ambassador, Wotton proved a diplomatic lightweight in comparison to his counterparts such as Sir Ralph Winwood and Sir Dudley Carleton, who both went on to

[1] Wilks 1997, p. 31, for example, has described Wotton, along with Arundel, as the 'arbiters of taste and prime instigators of the collecting phenomenon' in the years 1612–1619. Strong 1986a, p. 188, has stressed that 'Sir Henry Wotton was the key figure in disseminating the taste for Venetian painting [in England] and we know that he was busy acquiring pictures for both Cecil and his heir'. (While it is true that Wotton supplied Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, with paintings, there is, in fact, no evidence to show that he directly acquired pictures for his son.) For Wotton's relations with Salisbury and his son Viscount Cranborne see below. I would like to acknowledge the importance of the work of Tim Wilks, on which parts of this article have been based, and to thank Roger Lockyer for reading a draft ahead of publication and for suggesting a number of improvements. This article does not attempt to consider Wotton's interest in, and contribution to, architecture in England which requires detailed consideration of its own.

[2] A full scholarly biography of Wotton is long overdue. The key text on Wotton remains Pearsall Smith 1907. Virtually all the important letters for Wotton's career are to be found here. Regrettably, Pearsall Smith is too indulgent of Wotton's general indolence and of his failings as an ambassador, including his totally unrealistic schemes to detach Venice from Rome and his receipt of bribes from foreign powers such as Florence and Spain. (Wotton's ambassadorial contemporaries, such as Carleton and Winwood for example, were never accused of augmenting their salaries by accepting bribes). Since 1907 there has been one general survey of Wotton's life written by neuroscientist Gerald Curzon, which 'centres almost as much on Wotton's worlds as on Wotton himself', and which does not seek to deal with artistic matters (see Curzon 2003, p. 16, for the above quotation). The only two recent accounts that discuss aspects of Wotton's contribution to art collecting are to be found in Shakeshaft 1979, pp. 3–8 and pp. 20–24, and Jacobsen 2003, pp. 66–76. I would like to thank Paul Shakeshaft for his generosity in allowing me to photocopy his report.

use their foreign postings as stepping-stones to subsequent promotions as Secretary of State. Unlike other agents and ambassadors of the period, however, Wotton was a true connoisseur with a discerning appreciation of painting and with innovative views on how pictures should be displayed to best effect. He was also a man who, through his sophisticated taste and artistic awareness, educated the many English travelers whom he met and entertained at his various Venetian palazzos.[3] Wotton did not have the financial resources to acquire an important collection of his own but he was the first Jacobean ambassador to appreciate the role that the presentation of works of art could play in gaining the support of influential patrons back home at the English court. He therefore played an important part in the assembling of the early groundbreaking collections of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and Prince Henry. His contribution to the collection of James I's all-powerful favorite, the Duke of Buckingham, has long been acknowledged, but this study seeks to argue that he supplied paintings to the Earl of Northampton, to Anne of Denmark, and perhaps to the latter's daughter Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia.

After an undistinguished early career mostly spent traveling around Italy and the continent, Wotton was appointed ambassador to Venice in 1604.[4] He therefore very sensibly set out to retain the support of the king, James VI/I, by sending him appropriate gifts and entertaining him through his witty and urbane dispatches. Little of Wotton's official correspondence prior to 1607 has survived and the first reference to artistic matters does not occur until a letter of 3 September of that year. Realizing that the king had little interest in art, Wotton had the good sense to send the monarch paintings that would appeal to James's religious sensibilities. In a letter to Salisbury, Wotton referred to the dispatching of 'a very true portrait, in portable forme, of Maestro Paulo the Servite taken from him at my request, presum-

[3] See, for example, Howarth 1997, p. 235. Howarth writes that 'the embassy in Venice (…) presided over by the art connoisseur Sir Henry Wotton (…) was not only a free pensione for the well connected, but an academy of polite accomplishments. Justice has yet to be done to the educative influence of Wotton'. Chaney 1998, p. 206 similarly comments that 'above all Wotton introduced a significant selection of his travelling compatriots to Renaissance buildings and paintings *in situ*'. It is known that during his second embassy Wotton briefly occupied the elegant Palazzo Gusoni-Grimani on the Grand Canal. Its façade contained frescoes by Tintoretto.

[4] Wotton had also spent the years 1595–1599 working for Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Essex. The latter's execution for treason had a disastrous effect on Wotton's hopes of rapid advancement.

ing that (…) it may be (…) some pleasure unto his Matie to beholde a sound Protestant, as yet in the habit of a Friar'.[5] When the picture was confiscated by the Inquisition in Milan,[6] Wotton assured the secretary, three months later, that one Captain Pinner would be bringing a replacement 'picture of P[adre] Paulo], which his Matie shall now through the miscarriage of the former, receave with the late addition of his Scarrs'.[7] A second painting was also sent in July of the following year, dispatched for the king's 'recreation'. This consisted of a 'picture whereof there was but one copy sent hither this week to the Signory which (…) I think unfeignedly will do more good than all the books that have ever been written against the Papacy, being the most perfect idea of Antichrist that all the angels of darkness can form'.[8]

Wotton was also aware of the need to ingratiate himself with the highly influential secretary, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (Fig. 1), to whom he owed his ambassadorial posting to Venice. He was, for example, careful to reassure his employer in June 1606 that 'those pledges of youre continuing favor are very deare and comfortable unto me'.[9] The ambassador seems to have sent his first—unknown—painting to Salisbury at the end of 1607, since he mentioned in one of his despatches that Captain Pinner's 'departure hath been retarded certayn days for the drying of that picture mentioned in yre Ldp's last which extremitie of the weather did hinder'.[10] A year later Wotton persuaded

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[5] National Archives, Kew, State Papers (NASP) 99/4/146, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 13 September 1607. Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 398–400. Pearsall Smith has modernized the spelling and punctuation in his transcriptions of Wotton's letters. In quoting from these letters I have kept to the original text where it has been possible to consult the documents held in the National Archives and the British Library. Sarpi, a Servite priest, was the most learned Italian intellectual of the period. He was a close friend of Doge Leonardo Donato and his chief adviser during the Great Interdict imposed on Venice by the pope, Paul V, in 1606. Sarpi always argued for a strict separation of church and state and he drew up a defense of the Republic's anti-papal stance which was circulated to the monarchs of Europe.

[6] See Pearsall Smith 1907, Appendix III, vol. 2, p. 479.

[7] NASP 99/4/201, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 21 December 1607 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 407–408). The priest had been the victim of a recent assassination attempt in the Campo Santa Fosca, in which a dagger had been plunged into his cheekbone. A statue of the priest now stands in the Campo to mark the spot of the attempted assassination. Sarpi was able to make a pun of the event. 'I recognise the stylum [*i.e.* sharp instrument] of the Romia Curia', he declared.

[8] NASP 99/5/144, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 5 July 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 431).

[9] NASP 99/3/107, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 13 June 1606.

[10] NASP 99/4/212, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 25 December 1607.

Salisbury to have his portrait copied in the form of a mosaic, as was the custom in Venice. As he informed the secretary, 'I must give yr Ldp humble thanks, apart from the rest of my great obligations, for your picture wherewith it hath pleased you to honour me, which I now expect here within [a] few days (…) And when it comes I shall be bold to put it into another material'. The picture was one of a number of versions of John de Critz's portrait of the secretary, but with the addition of the Garter robes, which he was entitled to wear as a member of the noblest Order of the Garter—the senior order of chivalry in England.[11] Imposing his taste further on his patron, Wotton suggested that Salisbury send his 'Coat armour in the true colours, with the mantling and crest' so that 'being done here in mosaic, it may afterwards be very fitly placed in the front of your buildings over the portal'. As he assured the secretary, 'I have seen the like in this country stand with great decency and dignity'.[12]

The portrait of Salisbury, which was quickly transferred into mosaic, seems to have been a success.[13] In August 1608 one Tibbot Gorges, who was obviously struck by the novelty of the concept, wrote to inform Salisbury that the portrait 'was admired by us all, in regard as well of the lively resemblance, as of the curious work'.[14] Wotton did not write again to the secretary about the mosaic until April of the following year, by which time, with a view to his future prospects, he had decided to present it to Salisbury's son, Viscount Cranborne, while nevertheless making clear his 'obligations' to the secretary himself. As he informed the latter, the mosaic was 'the best present that I could conceave for my Lord of Cramborn youre Sonn, in humble acknowledgement of my great obligations towards your owne noble person and memorie'. Modestly claiming that the mosaic 'much exceeded mine own expectation', he characteristically went on to suggest how it might be displayed to best advantage. He reported that 'it is the workman's speciale suit and remembrance, that it may be sett in his true

[11] Bracken 2002, p. 124.

[12] NASP 99/5/60, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 4 April 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 419–420).

[13] Charles Avery has suggested that this was the work of the Zuccati family: Chaney 2003, p. 107, n.315.

[14] Historical Manuscript Commission (HMC) Salisbury, August 1608, p. 233.

light and at a little more heigth from the eye then a coloured picture would require'.[15]

To maximize the effect of the presentation, Wotton wrote personally to the viscount two months later. He launched first into a eulogy of Salisbury's 'noble labors and (…) Christian counsayles and intentions (wherewith I dare boldly say no servant of his Maties abroade is (…) better acquaynted then myself)', before humbly proffering the mosaic to Cranborne. 'Now, (my Lord) to whom could I more properly dedicat[e] this poore present than to youre self who are his better image and to whom he will finally (though God long deferr it for the publique good) leave his estate?'[16] The mosaic was initially kept in the secretary's London residence, Salisbury House, before it was moved to Hatfield in 1617, after Cranborne had himself become earl.[17]

Of greater importance for the future of art collecting in England, however, were the paintings that Wotton sent to Salisbury, since these were among the earliest Venetian pictures to arrive in the country.[18] As seen above, Wotton probably dispatched his first picture to his patron in December 1607 and five months later, in April 1608, he 'adventured to entertayne youre Ldp with two or three poore things (…) that are sent in a shipp cal[l]ed the Martha of London whose Master is one Sammon'.[19] These included 'a picture of this famouse Duke [*i.e.* Doge Leonardo Donato], donn truly and naturaly but roughly alla Venetiana' which the ambassador suggested should 'be set att some good distance fro[m] the sight'. There was also 'a figure (I take it) of Prometheus (Fig. 2) devoured by the eagle donn by Giacobo [*i.e.* Jacopo] Palma in concurrence with Titiano wch for the emulation betweene two paynters (bothe of no smale name) I dare almost saye to be worthy of a corner in one of youre Ldp's galeries'.[20] Further canvasses soon followed since, in July, Salisbury expressed his 'affectionate thankes' for

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[15] NASP 99/5/246, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 24 April 1609 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 452–453).

[16] NASP 99/5/264, Wotton to Viscount Cranborne, Venice, 22 June 1609 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 460–461).

[17] Bracken 2002, p. 124. It was later set above the fireplace in the library.

[18] For Salisbury's art collection see Bracken 2002.

[19] This presumably is the painting, the receipt of which was acknowledged by the secretary in February 1608: NASP 99/5/34, Salisbury to Wotton, 11 February 1608.

[20] NASP 99/5/60, Wotton to Salisbury, Venice, 25 March 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 419–420).

the 'other two exquisite peeces' which Wotton had sent him,[21] while three months later he again commented on 'the thankes that I must give you for those curiosities that you have sent me (howsoever I have not yet heard of their arrivall').[22]

Regrettably, as Susan Bracken has recently pointed out, it has proved difficult in practice to trace the identity of the paintings sent to Salisbury by Wotton during the latter's first embassy.[23] There are, for example, pictures of a seemingly Italian origin in Salisbury's collection such as the *St Lawrence* listed in the Hatfield inventory of 1611 and a 'faire picture of *Abraham Sara and Isaac*' included in its successor of the following year, but these may have been the result of Cranborne's own visit to Italy in 1610 rather than emanating from Wotton himself.[24] Nevertheless, Bracken has conjectured that although 'no correspondence survives to identify Wotton as the sender of either of the two paintings of the *Queen of Cyprus*' which are listed in the Salisbury inventories, 'it seems most unlikely that these came from anywhere else'.[25]

Art historians are, however, convinced that at least one of the paintings sent by Wotton to Salisbury, the Palma *Prometheus*, was subsequently presented to Prince Henry (Fig. 3) in 1610. This would have been a source of great satisfaction to the ambassador who, as well as cultivating his relations with the king and Salisbury, also set about establishing a close relationship with the future monarch. It is known

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[21] NASP 99/5/180, Salisbury to Wotton, 22 July 1608. Shakeshaft 1979, p. 2, n.22, comments that 'a telling detail is that the word "exquisite" is inserted in another hand', implying that the secretary did not have the artistic awareness to make this judgment himself. In fact, other non-aesthetic phrases have been added by the same hand elsewhere in the letter.

[22] NASP 99/5/180, Salisbury to Wotton, 5 October 1608, quoted in Shakeshaft 1979, p. 7.

[23] Bracken 2003, p. 208: 'Wotton is always cited as the source of anything that might possibly be Italian which appears in the inventories of Salisbury (…). While it is certainly true that he supplied some things (…) he is by no means the only source and puzzlingly, of those which can be directly traced to him, none appears in the inventories taken in Salisbury's lifetime'.

[24] Since Cranborne had stayed with Wotton at the Venetian embassy in November 1610 the ambassador could, of course, have recommended what pictures he should buy in the studios of the Venetian Republic. For Cranborne's visit to Italy see Stoye 1989, pp. 85–87. Edward Chaney has conjectured that it was Wotton who 'was probably responsible for Salisbury's son, Viscount Cranborne, visiting Vicenza and praising Palladio by name for the first time in an English context in his 1610 diary account': Chaney 1998, p. 171. The diary account is to be found in HMC Hatfield XXI, p. 242.

[25] Bracken 2002, p. 125.

that Wotton kept a portrait of the prince in his study, which he must have realized would please Henry when he was informed of it by English visitors to the embassy.[26] The open hostility which developed between the papacy and the Venetian Republic in 1606, and which resulted in Pope Paul V placing Venice under an interdict, was naturally followed closely at the strongly Protestant court of the prince.[27] The doge, in September 1606, sent a copy of Paolo Sarpi's defense of the Republic's policy to King James but also chose to present a second copy to Prince Henry.[28] This must have had some impact on the prince for, in May 1607, Wotton informed the doge how the prince had written saying he would have offered his services to Venice if only he had been old enough.[29] In January 1608, in an attempt to win the prince's favor, Wotton sent him an unidentified New Year's gift via Captain Pinner.[30] This was followed up in April 1609 by a second personal letter to the prince in which Wotton alluded to 'how graciously it pleased you to receave that poore unworthie present which I sent' and noted 'withal how carefully and kindely your Highnesse inquired of the state of things heere'.[31] Indeed, as Wotton reported to the doge, the prince had taken Captain Pinner aside 'and talked to him privately for half an hour; asking questions about Venice and praising the Republic'.[32]

In an attempt to broaden his support at the prince's court, Wotton wrote to Sir David Murray, Henry's Gentleman of the Bedchamber, saying that he was sending both Murray, 'and Mr. Newton [*i.e.* the prince's tutor] equal portions of oure Venetian commoditie [probably Venetian treacle]'.[33] A letter to the prince followed in August introducing to him the person of Vicenzo Correr, who was visiting England .[34]

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[26] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 57.

[27] Strong 1986, p. 75.

[28] *CSPV* 1603–1607, p. 404, quoted in Strong 1986, p. 231.

[29] *CSPV* 1603–1607, p. 2, Wotton to the Doge and Cabinet, Venice, 7 May 1607.

[30] 'Having had occasion for his Maties service (wherein youre owne is always included) to dispatche home this honest captayne: I have presumed by him (with the remembrance of my hartie zeale) to present unto your Highnesse a poore New Years gift'. British Library, MS Harleian (BL, Harl. MS) 7007, f. 170, Wotton to Prince Henry, Venice, 1 January 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 409–410).

[31] BL, Harl. MS 7007, f. 185, Wotton to Prince Henry, Venice, 24 April 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 425–426).

[32] *CSPV 1603–1607*, p. 129: Wotton to the Doge and Senate, 30 April 1608.

[33] BL, Lansdowne MS 90, f. 139, Wotton to Sir David Murray, Venice, 24 April 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 427–428).

[34] Vicenzo Correr was the young son of Marc Antonio Correr, the new Venetian ambassador to England.

The excuse for this 'zealous poore servant' presuming to write was, Wotton declared, 'because youre Highnesse hath (as they are heere well informed) been pleased sundrie tymes to inquire with much affection of the course of their affayres, and qualitie of their ministers'.[35] The ambassador continued to keep the prince up to date with Venetian affairs and was also able to provide further services by introducing members of his court to the doge.[36] In January Wotton formally presented John Harington, whom he described as the intimate friend and 'right eye of the prince',[37] and six months later introduced Sir Robert Douglas, whom Prince Henry had sent to Italy to purchase horses on his behalf.[38]

By this time, it appears that one or more of the pictures which Wotton had sent to Salisbury in 1608 had entered the prince's collection. Sir David Murray had written to the secretary, informing him that 'his Highness has perused your letter and desires that you come before the one of the clock with your pictures, and if there be not time to discourse then that want may be supplied in his coming to Whitehall to the sermon'. In the event of Salisbury's absence, the secretary was to 'send my Ld of Arundel as deputy to set forth the praise of your pictures'.[39] It seems clear that, during the viewing, the prince must have expressed his admiration of Salisbury's Venetian pictures, and that the latter, either willingly or otherwise, felt obliged to present him with at least one of his paintings.[40] This was the Palma *Prometheus Chained to the Caucasus*, sent by Wotton in April 1608, which is recorded as being part of the prince's collection in 1613.[41] The presentation of the picture was not without importance, though

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[35] BL, Harl MS 7007, f. 202, Wotton to Prince Henry, Venice, 16 August 1608 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 432–434).

[36] For example by getting his nephew, Albertus Morton, personally to visit Prince Henry in June 1609. See BL, Harl. MS 7007, f. 271, Wotton to Prince Henry, Venice, 22 June 1609 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 459).

[37] *CSPV 1607–1610*, pp. 215–216: Wotton to the Doge, 13 January 1609.

[38] *CSPV 1607–1610*, p. 295: Wotton to the Doge, 7 July 1609.

[39] HMC Hatfield, March 1610, XXI, p. 39.

[40] As Wilks 1989, p. 169 conjectures, 'It would have been difficult for Salisbury to have avoided some show of generosity on this occasion, particularly since his pictures were brought to Henry's palace for the viewing—he could hardly have left with all of them'.

[41] The picture of 'The history of Tityus, how he lies, and the eagle picks out his heart' was noted when the Duke of Saxe-Weimar visited St James's Palace in 1613. See Rye 1865, pp. 161–162. The painting is still in the Royal Collection today. Shearman 1985, p. 123, first identified the *Tityus* and the *Prometheus* as the same picture.

perhaps Tim Wilks exaggerates somewhat in claiming that it proved 'a significant point in English collecting' by acting 'as a remarkable spur' to Prince Henry in his subsequent collecting of Venetian paintings over the next two years.[42]

Henry's interest in things Italian was still apparent in March 1611 when the Venetian ambassador observed: 'The Prince has abandoned the French dress and has taken to the Italian (…) it seems to him more modest and more convenient in itself and less costly for the suite, as he cannot endure the changes in fashion which come every day from France'.[43] Two months earlier he had noticed that the prince was building 'una bellisima galleria di belissime pitture antiche et moderne la maggior parte cavate di Venetia'.[44] That the prince appeared enthusiastic about Venetian painting was confirmed by Sir Walter Cope's letter to Sir Dudley Carleton[45] of the same month, advising him that 'If you meete with any ancient Masterpeeces of paintings at a reasonable price you cannot send anything more gracious either to the Prince or my Lo. Treasurer [Salisbury]'.[46]

The composition of Prince Henry's collection has been the subject of much conjecture among art historians, since no inventory exists dating from the prince's lifetime.[47] He is recorded as making a number of large payments for pictures, of which by far the largest sum was £408-17s-6d made over to the banker Philip Burlamachi for a shipment from Venice which probably arrived in England in 1610.[48] It is not known what paintings arrived in the shipment or how many, though it probably contained around twenty pictures.[49] As Wilks

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[42] Wilks 1989, pp. 168–169 for the two quotations.

[43] *CSPV 1610–1613*, pp. 122–123: Marc Antonio Correr to the Doge and Senate, 10 March 1611. Correr did not assert that Prince Henry had adopted 'Venetian dress' as such, as claimed by Shakeshaft 1979, p. 10.

[44] *CSPV 1610–1613*, p. 106: Marc Antonio Correr to the Doge and Senate, 14 January 1611.

[45] Carleton, Wotton's successor as ambassador to Venice, had arrived in the Republic in December 1610.

[46] NASP 14/61/33, Sir Walter Cope to Carleton, London, 26 January 1611. For Walter Cope as a collector: Peck 2005, pp. 156–157 and Williams 2003, p. 178. Peck comments that Cope 'possessed the best known *Wunderkammer* in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries'.

[47] See in particular Strong 1986, and Wilks 1987.

[48] NAK, E351–2794, 1611–1612. 'Burlamachi for the Pictures that came from Venice', quoted in Wilks 1997, p. 35.

[49] In February 1615 Daniel Nijs charged Carleton 800 ducats (*i.e.* £200) for eleven pictures. The consignment consisted of five Tintorettos, three Veroneses, a Bassano,

suggests, it probably included a *Sacrifice of Isaac* attributed to Leonardo Corona and a *Seated Lady in Yellow* attributed to Tintoretto, since both of these were listed by Abraham van der Doort in his inventory of Charles I's collection of 1639–1640 as having been among the prince's paintings. Since 'three other pictures seen in the Prince's gallery in the summer of 1613 had subjects that were certainly popular within the Venetian school: *Bacchus, Ceres and Venus; Cain and Abel*; and *Judith and Holofernes* (…) these too were probably part of the purchase'.[50] In this the prince appears to have been the first English collector to receive a number of consignments of paintings from Venice.

If this large shipment, discussed above, arrived around 1610—which seems likely from Correr's description of his collection in January 1611—then it would appear that Wotton was the agent responsible for purchasing and sending off the paintings. As Wilks has pointed out, in 1610 he was the only person able 'by both location and knowledge to handle such transactions'.[51] The only other conceivable agent would have been Sir Dudley Carleton, Wotton's successor in Venice, who arrived in December 1610, but, as I have argued elsewhere, Carleton was much too lethargic during his early years in the Venetian Republic to have exerted himself on behalf of his English patrons.[52] It seems clear, however, that Wotton was not assisted in putting together the assignment by the unscrupulous Flemish merchant, Daniel Nijs (or Nys), who came, in time, to dominate the Venetian art market.[53] (See also Maartje van Gelder's contribution on Daniel Nijs in this volume). Five years later, in 1615, Nijs assembled for Carleton the important consignment of antique sculptures and Venetian paintings that was sent to London to augment the collection of the king's favorite, Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset.[54] Although Wilks has argued that it seems likely that 'Nys was the supplier of both the 1610 and 1615 shipments', there is no reference to Nijs in any of Wotton's letters during his first embassy

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a Titian and a Schiavone. See NASP 14/80/88a written in Italian and translated in Sainsbury 1859, p. 259.

[50] Wilks 1997, p. 35 and p. 46, n.33. Discussion of the prince's collection more recently in Wilks 2005.

[51] Wilks 1987, p. 160.

[52] Hill 2003, p. 241.

[53] On Nijs see chapter 6.

[54] This was to constitute the most important consignment of works of art sent to England in the Jacobean period, the antique statues costing £500 and the paintings costing £305: Hill 2003, pp. 244–245.

in Venice.[55] The first mention of Nijs in the *State Papers Venetian* does not appear until a letter written to Carleton by his secretary, Isaac Wake, in September 1613.[56] It seems unlikely, therefore, that Nijs was an agent trained by Wotton to buy in the Venetian art market for his friends and supporters whom Carleton simply took over from after his arrival in Venice in late 1610.

If Wotton supplied the prince with Venetian paintings, it also seems probable that he provided a similar service to Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, one of the 'trinity of knaves' who, according to James I's jest, ruled the country on his behalf.[57] Attention has recently been drawn to the neglected inventory of the earl's possessions, which was compiled on his death in June 1614.[58] Among the summary of the contents of the gallery of his house in Greenwich (left in his will to the Earl of Arundel) there is a reference to 'Item 14 Venetian pictures of one bignes'.[59] Regrettably, how these Venetian paintings arrived in Northampton's collection is open to question. The most convincing period for their purchase appears to have been at some point after 1603 when Northampton's influence was at its height. If the embassy in Venice was the agency for their acquisition, as it had been for Prince Henry, then late 1610, the final year of Wotton's ambassadorship, seems the most likely date. As Wilks has argued, 'Wotton (…) would have bought art to ingratiate himself with the Lord Privy Seal as readily as he would for the Lord Treasurer or the Prince of Wales'. However, although Wilks draws attention to the visit of Northampton's great nephew, another Henry Howard, to Venice in November 1610 in the company of Viscount Cranborne, he rules out the former as a purchaser of the pictures. Henry Howard, he argues, 'was inexperienced, spoke no Italian, and soon fell sick and was incapacitated for much of the remainder of his time in the Republic'.[60] The probability which Wilks does not consider, but which seems to me the most plausible, is that Howard arrived in Venice with a commission to acquire Venetian

[55] Wilks 1989, p. 172.
[56] NASP 99/13/261, Isaac Wake to Carleton, Venice, 21 September 1613.
[57] The other two 'knaves' were Salisbury and Northampton's nephew, Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk. For the quotation: Somerset 1997, p. 15. For Northampton, see Peck 1982 and 1991.
[58] Peck 1991. Wilks 1997, pp. 37–41 discusses in detail the contents of the earl's various residences.
[59] Shirley 1869, p. 372.
[60] Wilks 1997, p. 39.

paintings for his great uncle, and that he made use of the artistic expertise of Wotton to purchase the pictures on Northampton's behalf. The inclusion of the words 'Mr H. Howarde' alongside the entry for the fourteen pictures on the inventory points to his involvement with them in some capacity. Linda Levy Peck has interpreted the entry as showing that Henry Howard was the actual purchaser of the pictures, while Wilks has taken it to mean that on his great uncle's death, Howard 'simply took what he liked, defying the executors, or, more probably, he had been promised these pictures by Northampton'.[61] Even if we accept this interpretation it does not preclude, but rather reinforces, the suggestion that Henry Howard had acquired the pictures during his visit to Venice in 1610. He seized them on Northampton's death in 1614 either because he knew of their existence (having acquired them himself), or because he had been promised them by his great uncle, for whom he had purchased them in the first place.

Wotton left Venice at the end of his first embassy in late December 1610, traveling back to England via Turin to discuss the proposal of the Duke of Savoy for a double marriage between the latter's daughter, the Princess Maria, and James I's son, Prince Henry, and between his son and Prince Henry's sister, the Princess Elizabeth. Wotton was back in London by early March 1611 and was received warmly by the king, who awarded him an annual pension of £200 and promised him a clerkship in Chancery when one next fell vacant. The six years that Wotton spent in England have left little trace in the records, and historians are left to rely almost exclusively on the well-known letters exchanged between John Chamberlain and his close friend Carleton, Wotton's replacement in Venice. In fact, Chamberlain had traveled out to Venice with Carleton in December 1610 and had spent a year in the Venetian Republic, initially moving in with Wotton at the English embassy.[62] Both men appear to have taken an instant dis-

[61] Peck 1991, p. 166 and 2005, p. 167. For the alternative interpretation: Wilks 1997, p. 39.

[62] The embassy must have been rather crowded since it also contained Viscount Cranborne, who had been taken ill in Padua during his visit to the Veneto, as mentioned above. Chamberlain was painted by Domenico Tintoretto during his visit for, on 29 March 1616, Carleton in a letter to Chamberlain alludes to 'a picture of yours I have of Tintoret's hand'. NASP 84/72/42, Carleton to Chamberlain, The Hague, 29 March 1616, printed in Lee 1972, p. 195. For Wotton's own portrait by the same artist see below.

like to Wotton. Carleton regarded him as 'an elegant and incompetent dilettante' whom he and Chamberlain henceforth referred to in their correspondence as 'Fabritio', the fabricator of lies.[63] In November 1611, John Chamberlain noted that financial constraints had forced Wotton to dismiss all of his servants except 'for his Dutch butler, Price and his page'. Also, Chamberlain reported on the well-known wager that Wotton made with Prince Henry. The bet involved 'three of his [Wotton's] choice pictures against three of the prince's horses' that Mark Bilford, one of Wotton's 'gentlemen', 'shall draw or pourtray the Prince better than Isaach [Oliver], the French painter in the Blackfriers'.[64] The former ambassador had clearly brought back some 'choice' paintings with him from Venice and, indeed, one traveler to Venice in May 1610 had noted that Wotton owned a picture 'that 2000 chackin [*i.e.* sequins] will not buie; every chakin is 7s 6d of our monies'.[65] As Wilks remarks of the incident, 'Of course, Wotton did not hold out any hope of fairly winning the wager and thereby depriving Henry of his beloved horses (…). Having staked them, it is likely

[63] Lee 1972, p. 13. Carleton and Chamberlain were, however, hardly Wotton's 'enemies', nor was Carleton 'jealous of Wotton' as Curzon asserts (Curzon 2003, pp. 20 and 171). Carleton is usually regarded as the ablest of the Jacobean ambassadors and had little to fear from any comparisons with Wotton. Although a number of writers have seen Carleton and Wotton as rivals for advancement at court, they were not in direct competition for the same office, the provostship of Eton, until 1624. Jacobsen, for example, has written of the two men as 'arch rivals' and also asserts that 'until the 1620s [Wotton] was ahead of Carleton in the political game' (Jacobsen 2003, pp. 34 and 78). Carleton had, in fact, effectively overtaken Wotton when he was posted to The Hague in 1614.

[64] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 311–315: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 13 November 1611. In September 1607 Wotton had written to Ferdinand I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, to recommend Bilford, claiming that the latter was, 'nella sua professione di ritrarre in miniatura forse non inferiore a nessun altro vivente': Howarth 1997, p. 2. Three years later, in December 1610, Isaac Wake had taken an inventory of the contents of the rooms of Wotton's house in Venice, which Carleton had agreed to take over. In the inventory (NASP 99/6/215) there is a reference to the 'Painter's Chamber', which appears to relate to Bilford. Thomas Coryate also referred to Bilford, in 1609, as one of Wotton's 'principal Gentleman'. Bilford had fortuitously rescued Coryate from some forty or fifty swaggering Jews in the Ghetto, as the painter had passed by in a boat with the ambassador. See Strachan 1962, p. 53. Shakeshaft 1979, p. 4, also suggests that Bilford was responsible for the portraits of Sarpi which Wotton sent to James I.

[65] BL, MS Sloane 682, f. 21. Stoye 1989, p. 339, n.27, conjectures that the anonymous traveler was possibly Thomas Berkeley.

that Wotton relinquished his three pictures to the Prince regardless' of Bilford's abilities as an artist.[66]

Chamberlain was in no doubt that the wager represented an attempt by Wotton to further ingratiate himself with the prince[67] and in this respect it proved well timed since, when Salisbury fell ill in February 1611, Chamberlain reported that Wotton seemed well placed among the 'number of competitors' for the secretaryship.[68] Although Salisbury made a recovery, this proved short-lived, as he died three months later on 24 May. All gossip now centered on his successor since, although King James tried to conduct State affairs himself, this proved beyond him. In a series of letters dispatched during the following months, Chamberlain reported very favorably on Wotton's chances of securing the post.[69] In the event, however, a number of misfortunes proved Wotton's undoing. At the time of Salisbury's death he was absent abroad, sent as ambassador extraordinary to Savoy to advance Prince Henry's marriage to the duke's daughter. Although Chamberlain reported that 'some say the King hath made a promise to the Quene not to dispose of the place till the return of Sir Harry Wotton',[70] it proved to his disadvantage that he was unable personally to press his claims to office until he came back in August 1612.[71] Moreover, his firm advocacy of the Savoy marriage proved injudicious, since it did him more harm than good.[72]

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[66] Wilks 1987, p. 102. In the event, Bilford entered Prince Henry's service shortly after the wager, which must have greatly pleased Wotton, his former employer.

[67] 'Signor Fabritio insinuats what he can with him'.

[68] McClure 1939, I, pp. 338–341: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 11 March 1612.

[69] He reported, for example, that Wotton was 'thought to be much' in Prince Henry's favor, that 'the Quene and the Prince are earnest in Sir H. Wotton's behalf and the Lord of Rochester is not willing (…) to oppose him' and that 'in his last letter to the King' Salisbury had even 'recommended Sir Harry Wotton' for his office. McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 350–352, pp. 356–60 and pp. 361–363, Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 27 May, 17 June and 25 June 1612.

[70] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 363–366: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 2 July 1612.

[71] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 375–378: Chamberlain to Carleton, 11 August 1612: '[Wotton] is gon toward the King with his pictures and projects'. The pictures were probably two portraits of the Duke of Savoy and portraits of his two eldest daughters which were hung in the king's Privy Gallery at Whitehall. These were described by van der Doort as 'brought by Sr Henrie Wooton from Savoy and given to Kinge James'. See Millar 1958–1960, pp. 33–34.

[72] For the various negotiations regarding Prince Henry's marriage: Strong 1986, pp. 59–88. Strong, p. 75, points out that 'The key figure in all the negotiations for marriages with the House of Savoy was Sir Henry Wotton'.

Chamberlain was already commenting in October that 'the match with Savoy cools' and Wotton increasingly appeared isolated at court as almost the only supporter of a match to which Prince Henry was himself firmly opposed, since he was unwilling to take a Catholic bride.[73] The final blow came in November when Wotton's notorious definition of a diplomat 'as an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country' came to the king's attention.[74] Although Wotton made light of his witticism 'the King told him yt was no jesting matter, and that he shold aunswer for himself'. Chamberlain was convinced that the incident had finished off Wotton's chances of high office, relating that he 'is thought to be downe the wind, and his busines begins to quaile'.[75] Wotton tried to recover the king's support by writing a letter of apology for the embarrassment he had caused, but although James said he was satisfied, Wotton remained out of favor. The final blow to his hopes of advancement came on 5 November with the unexpected and sudden death from typhoid of Prince Henry, his principal patron since Salisbury's demise. When Isaac Wake[76] visited Wotton on November 25 he was received with 'much ceremony *all'Italliana*' but, not surprisingly, he found his host and supporters 'much crest fallen'.[77] Wotton's career had now peaked and he was never again to be considered for any major office.

Wotton appears to have spent 1613 living quietly in London, having written to Carleton in February that he was 'contented, I thank God, with mine own poor thoughts (…) having lost this fatal year two great patrons' (*i.e.* Salisbury and Prince Henry). Wotton seems still to have been buying paintings from Venice, since he went on to thank his successor 'for the care it pleased you to take about those pictures, which I have received by your means in very good condition'.[78] He

[73] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 380–383: Chamberlain to Carleton, 22 October 1612.

[74] Wotton had written down his definition as a contribution to Christopher Fleckmore's album eight years earlier in 1604, while traveling through Augsburg. For details: Curzon 2003, pp. 175–178. As Curzon, p. 175, comments, 'when Wotton wrote his definition it can hardly have occurred to him that it might be widely circulated in Augsburg'.

[75] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 383–386: Chamberlain to Winwood, 3 November 1612, for both quotations.

[76] Isaac Wake had been sent by Carleton to England to discover what his own hopes of advancement were following Salisbury's death.

[77] NASP 99/11/125 and NASP 99/11/158, Wake to Carleton, 25 November and 9 December 1612.

[78] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 14–15: Wotton to Carleton, 25 February 1613.

continued to press for a Savoy marriage, this time on behalf of Prince Charles, and when the Duke of Savoy sent the Marchese Villa as a special ambassador to England in April, Wotton 'never stirred from his elbow'.[79] At the end of July Chamberlain found Wotton among the company at Ware Park, the home of Sir Henry Fanshawe, a mutual friend, who was engaged in bringing his garden 'almost to perfection',[80] and encountered him there again a year later, in May 1614.[81] Fanshawe was a former favorite of Prince Henry, and shared his patron's interest in paintings, prints and drawings. His collection included *A Portrait of a Woman* by Palma Vecchio, which, according to Abraham van der Doort, Fanshawe gave to Charles I, but Wilks has shown that the king appropriated the painting from Fanshawe's widow shortly after Sir Henry's death.[82] How the picture entered Fanshawe's collection is unknown, but Wilks is surely correct in pointing to Wotton as the most likely source.[83]

If Wotton presented a picture to Fanshawe, it is also worth considering the probability that he provided a similar service to Queen Anne of Denmark during the years he spent in England between his first and second embassies to Venice. As we have seen, the queen was regarded as an active supporter of Wotton in his quest for the secretaryship in 1612, and Chamberlain commented on her presenting him (through his nephew, Albertus Morton) with a 'jewell' as a mark of her favor.[84] Regrettably, if Wotton did make any gifts of Venetian pictures to the queen, it is impossible with our present knowledge to suggest what they may have been. The inventories taken of her palaces at Oatlands and Denmark House reveal that Dutch and Flemish, rather than Italian, pictures came to dominate her collection; there were, for example, only five paintings with apparently Italian attributions hanging in Denmark House in 1619. It seems clear that the queen appropriated a number of paintings from the collection of her

[79] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 462–465: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 8 July 1613.

[80] For Fanshawe's garden see Strong, 1979, pp. 123–124. McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 468–472, Chamberlain to Carleton, 1 August 1613. To Chamberlain's irritation Wotton took 'upon him[self] to propound many new devices, and would fain be a director where there is no need of his help'.

[81] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 527–530: Chamberlain to Carleton, 12 May 1614.

[82] Millar 1958–1960, p. 49; Wilks 1997, pp. 35–36.

[83] Wilks 1997, pp. 36–37.

[84] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 356–361: Chamberlain to Carleton, 17 June 1612.

son, Prince Henry, but it is unclear whether the Italian pictures that she did own came from this source or had been acquired through some other agency.[85]

By the end of October Wotton was back at court by order of the king, and he expected to be appointed again to a foreign embassy. Wotton believed that he would be sent to France, but in July 1614 James decided to send him as extraordinary ambassador to The Hague to try to settle the dispute over the succession to the strategically important Rhineland principality of Julich-Cleve, which threatened to engulf Europe in war. In the following month, further changes to postings abroad were announced, with Carleton appointed to replace Winwood as ambassador to The Hague, while Wotton himself returned to Venice. In the event, although Carleton set out from Venice in October 1614, he was recalled to try to resolve the differences between Spain and Savoy, which had led to open hostilities in the previous month. Chamberlain informed Carleton that Wotton was scheming to remain in Holland as ordinary ambassador,[86] but Wotton did not especially enjoy living there, especially since his intervention in the Julich-Cleve dispute had been ineffective.

He nevertheless appears to have used the occasion of his embassy to Holland to acquire Netherlandish paintings to present to his patrons at home. Around mid-1615 he seems to have sent the king's new favorite, the Earl of Somerset, a 'piece of perspective' that he compared with paintings of the Italian school. As he informed the earl,

> I am bold by this gentleman to entertain your Lordship with a piece of perspective which is a very busy kind of work and therefore think patient and phlegmatic hands do commonly more excel therein than Italians who rather affect draughts of spirit and action. But this piece which I now send hath a little life more than ordinary by addition of the personages which made me make choice of it for your better delectation.[87]

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[85] For Anne of Denmark's collection: Millar 1977, pp. 22–28 and the discussion in Wilks 1997, pp. 41–45. For an inventory of the contents of Denmark House in 1619: Payne 2001.

[86] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 565–567: Chamberlain to Carleton, 22 December 1614: 'Sir Harry Wotton wold build his tabernacle where he is'.

[87] The letter in the Folger Library, Washington D.C., MS. G.b. 10, f. 87v, partially published by Braunmuller 1991. The date, sender and addressee are inferential but Braunmuller follows Peck in attributing it to Wotton writing to Somerset. He speculates that the picture may have been the 'perspective Church' mentioned in the 1619 list of Somerset's pictures: Braunmuller 1991, pp. 232 and 338, n.11. Peck 1990, pp. 67 and 253, n.106, has also argued that Wotton had earlier in his mission sent Somerset

Wotton had already approached Somerset in November 1612 to press for more money on the occasion of the death of Sir George Carew, the former ambassador to France.[88] His own patron, Prince Henry, had himself died only nine days earlier and Wotton was doubtless anxious to secure a new influential supporter at court. If his comparison of the Netherlandish and Italian schools of art was lost on Somerset, who is not recorded as showing any genuine artistic appreciation, he was similarly wasting his efforts in trying to secure Somerset as a patron to advance his career. His colleagues Carleton and Trumbull both tried to cultivate Somerset's support by sending him works of art but they were to find him, in Chamberlain's words, 'a broken staffe, that cannot or will not, or (I am sure) hitherto hath not geven support to any that relied upon yt'.[89] In the event, Somerset's career was soon to be in ruins, with his confinement to the Tower in January 1616 and his subsequent conviction by the High Steward's court of complicity in the murder of his secretary, Sir Thomas Overbury.

In March, Wotton finally left England for his second embassy to Venice, which was to last three years. He had been ordered to travel to the Republic via Heidelberg and Turin with the aim of securing an alliance with the German Protestant princes and Savoy against the increasing power of the Habsburgs. Wotton spent eight days in Heidelberg, where he became much attached to the twenty-year-old Princess Elizabeth, who had in 1613 married Frederick, the Elector Palatine.[90] Wotton arrived in Venice in May 1616 and, feeling that the house left him by Carleton 'was not fitt for me in many respects',[91] moved to the

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another Dutch painting. In a letter to Somerset Wotton had acknowledged 'how much I am bound to your Lordship for the late intercession for me with the king (…) when occasion serves I will build upon your Lordship's mediation and patronage, and in the meanwhile give you some demonstration of my fideletie'.

[88] Wotton suggested that Carew's pension of £200 should be given to him as, although his own pension was also £200, he deserved more since he had been an ambassador in Venice for 'double the length of his [*i.e.* Carew's] in France': Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 8–9: Wotton to Rochester, 14 November 1612.

[89] McClure 1939, vol. 1, pp. 592–593: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 4 April 1615 (NASP 14/80/71). For Somerset's unreliability as a patron in the cases of Carleton and Trumbull: Hill 2003, pp. 214–215.

[90] Coincidentally, Wotton's nephew, Albertus Morton, was shortly to arrive in Heidelberg to take up his position as agent to the Protestant Union and to become Princess Elizabeth's secretary.

[91] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 295–296: Wotton to Winwood, 7 June 1616.

Palazzo Gussoni-Grimani on the Grand Canal in September.[92] He may have decided that the rent for the Palazzo was too expensive as he was only there for six weeks before changing houses once again. In between all of this house swopping, Wotton's only known acquisition during his second embassy was that of the *Miracle of the Holy Evangelist* by Pierro Malombra, originally commissioned by the Confraternity of San Giovanni but left incomplete on the artist's death.[93] However, Ridolfi, in his *Lives of the Artists*, recorded a long list of the subjects painted by Leandro da Ponte (or Bassano 1577–1622), including that of 'Sir Henry Wotton Englishman, standing, dressed in red' and a portrait of the ambassador by Domenico Tintoretto, son of the great artist, Jacopo Tintoretto. Both of these portraits seem best dated to the three years of his second embassy 1616–1619.[94]

Compared to his first embassy in the Venetian Republic, Wotton appears to have been strangely uninterested in exerting himself on behalf of his patrons at home. Nevertheless, he made belated attempts to cultivate Sir Ralph Winwood, to whom he sent his official dispatches as he had been appointed principal secretary in March 1614. As Winwood was not an art collector, Wotton sensibly chose to restrict his presents to other commodities. In October 1616, for example, he sent Winwood 'two poundes of our best Theriaca' to assist his health against 'maligne or pestilent feavers', with an additional promise to 'furnish' him 'excellently with seeds and rootes and slipes' should 'your Hon or my Ladie yr wyfe take delight in rare floures and plants'. Stressing his poverty to his employer, he added, 'You see, Sir, what my fortune is by thase easie presents'.[95] Wotton's attempts to insinuate himself with a new patron again proved unproductive, since Sir Ralph died a year later in October 1617. As he lamented to Thomas Lake, who briefly took over the foreign correspondence, 'I must confesse

[92] As Wotton informed Carleton, the latter's house in the Canarregio district had been inconvenient because of its 'farness from the Piazze' of St Marks. The palazzo Guissino-Grimaldi Wotton deemed as 'one of the fayrest in Venice'. Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 101–102: Wotton to Carleton, 2 September 1616.

[93] Ridolfi 1924, vol. 2, p. 158. Wotton, nevertheless, visited the flourishing studio, filled with many statues, antique heads and other curiosities, owned by the senators Carlo and Domenico Ruzzini. *CSPV 1621–1623*, p. 197 (quoted in Shakeshaft 1979, p. 26).

[94] Ridolfi 1924, vol. 2, pp. 168 and 260.

[95] NASP 99/21/193, Wotton to Winwood, 11 October 1616 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 105–106.) As Winwood was not interested in artistic matters it is unlikely that Wotton sent the secretary any paintings from Venice.

for mine owne particular (…) that I have lost a frend: wherof a single losse is much unto me that have but few'.[96] Chamberlain reported that Wotton was one of the names 'in consideration' for the vacant post of secretary[97] and the ambassador pressed his claim by writing to the new favorite, the Earl of Buckingham, in November 1617, asking for his support.[98] This was to no avail, however, for the secretaryship passed to Buckingham's nominee, Robert Naunton, in January 1618.

Wotton's fortunes did not improve when his lodgings caught fire in December 1617, though fortunately the damage only extended to three of his rooms. As he lamented to Naunton, 'The loss which I have sustained myself falls heavily upon so poor a man', though he tried to console himself with the thought that the accident 'is eased with this comfort that I serve a gracious and compassionate master'.[99] In May 1618 the disillusioned ambassador wrote to England to ask for temporary leave, informing Lake that the 'vaporous air' was becoming increasingly bad for his health and adding, facetiously, that he might find a wealthy widow in England to solve his financial difficulties.[100] As he confided to his friend Lord Zouche, 'when I consider how all those of my rancke have been dignified and benefited at home, while I have

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[96] NASP 99/22/159, Wotton to Secretary Lake, 6 December 1617 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 122).

[97] According to Chamberlain the candidates being considered were 'Sir Thomas Edmunds (…) Sir Harry Wotton, Sir John Bennet (that as they say offers fayre for it), Sir Humfry May, and Sir Robert Naunton, who both presume upon the Lord of Buckinghams favour'. McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 108–112: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 31 October 1617.

[98] McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 108–112: Chamberlain to Carleton, 31 October 1617. Wotton's presumed letter to Buckingham: Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 165. According to Pearsall Smith, vol. 2, pp. 130–131 and 132–133, Wotton wrote two further letters to Buckingham in May 1618, the first asking for permission 'to return home for a month or six weeks', the second relating to 'the deaths of two and the elections of two other Dukes (ie Doges) within the compass of six weeks'. As the name of the person to whom the three letters are addressed is not given, these attributions must remain speculative. Despite the May letter being addressed to 'My Most Honoured Lord and Patron' it is clear that, at this point, Wotton had not 'already won the patronage of the new and almost omnipotent favourite to James I' (see Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 165 for this latter assertion).

[99] NASP 99/22/167, Wotton to Secretary Naunton, 22 December 1617 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 125–127). The fire would not have destroyed Wotton's collection of pictures as some writers have maintained. Howarth 1997, p. 235, for example claims that 'sadly much of what Wotton had acquired over many years in Italy would appear to have been destroyed' in the fire. In 1629 Wotton claimed that the incident had cost him £400: Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 315–316: Wotton to King Charles I, Whitehall, 12 February 1629.

[100] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 129–130: Wotton to Lake, 4 May 1618.

been gathering of cockels uppon this Lake I am in good fayth impatient more of the shame then of the sens of want'.[101] When the king decided to dismiss Lake and appoint a new secretary in February 1619, Wotton was not even one of the names canvassed for the position.[102] Wotton must have been acutely aware that, at the age of 51, his career had progressed no further than the Venetian embassy, which he had first secured fifteen years earlier in 1604.

Wotton gave his farewell speech to the new doge, Antonio Priuli, on 30 April 1619 and left the Republic on 16 May, calling in at Munich and Augsburg on the way home to consult the German princes. By the end of July he was back in England and John Chamberlain reported to Carleton that 'Sir Harry Wotton is come (they say) in poore plight, having taried as long as his credit wold hold out, and with as litle hope to procure his entertainment here, or any tollerable condition'.[103] On Wotton's year in England, before he was obliged to return once more to Venice, we regrettably have little information. In December 1619 Chamberlain remarked on Wotton's desperate attempts to secure some office other than his Venetian posting. As he maliciously asserted, 'the litle ambitious man that doth so longe to be your successor [*i.e.* at The Hague], doth labour and sollicite as I heare very earnestly, for that or som such employment, beeing growne in great credit with our great man [*i.e.* George Villiers, the later Duke of Buckingham (Fig. 4)] and insinuating himself (yf all be true) by most unworthie meanes for a man of his qualitie'.[104] That Wotton had succeeded in securing Villier's favor seemed to be confirmed by his obtaining, in

[101] NASP 99/22/278, Wotton to Lord Zouche, 24 January 1619 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 161–162).

[102] According to Sir Thomas Wynn, the candidates being considered were John Packer (Buckingham's secretary), Dudley Carleton and Sir George Calvert: NASP 14/105/104, Sir Thomas Wynn to Carleton, 14 February 1619. In the event, the king insisted on Calvert's appointment. Signs of Wotton's increasing desperation at his poor finances and lack of job prospects can be detected in the sycophantic letter which he sent to congratulate Calvert on his appointment. 'I can very truly saye that the news of yr advansement did fill my hart with gladness, not in good fayth of any reflection uppon myself (…) but from that simple and just delight which every honest minde should take in the luster and fortunes of vertuouse men (…) I am preparing as you know homewards, and I shall come the more willingly, that you may see the truth of these professions even in mine eyes'. Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 167–168: Wotton to Calvert, Venice, 25 April 1619.

[103] McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 253–256: Chamberlain to Carleton, 31 July 1619.

[104] McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 276–278: Chamberlain to Carleton, 4 December 1619.

early January 1620, the promise of the Mastership of the Rolls on the death of the existing incumbent, Sir Julius Caesar.[105] The Master of the Rolls played a key role in the administration of justice, and Wotton hastened to write to Buckingham expressing his 'humble and hartie acknowledgement of my great obligations towardes yr Lordp: which will make me restlesse and in good faythe unhappie till I can some way showe myself youre Lordp's most thanckfull and faythfull servant.'[106] On the same day Chamberlain reported that Carleton was expected to be appointed to a post at court and that Wotton was to succeed him at The Hague.[107] In the event, Wotton was reappointed to Venice with orders to act as extraordinary ambassador on a diplomatic mission to the German princes and the Emperor Ferdinand on his journey back to the Venetian Republic. Resting at Greenwich, shortly after setting out for his return, he produced his well-known poem in honor of the king's daughter Princess Elizabeth, whom he had met four years earlier in Heidelberg and whose husband had recently been elected King of Bohemia.[108] Wotton left the country at the end of June in great state accompanied by 'more than twenty younge gentlemen' and with his finances seemingly much improved in view of 'his late confident speach that he doth not now owe one pennie in England'.[109] The portrait of Wotton (Fig. 5), dressed in his fur-lined ambassador's robes, which is now at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, appears to date from these months since it is inscribed 'Aetatis suae 52 A[nn]o 1620'. Pearsall Smith describes its subject as seemingly 'in the prime of life' and almost like 'some bluff Kentish squire or yeoman'.[110] However, Wotton must have been sorely disappointed at the prospect of return-

[105] *CSPD 1619–1623*, p. 113.

[106] BL Harl. MS 581, Wotton to Buckingham, 25 January 1620, f. 212. Shakeshaft erroneously claims that 'in return for his New Year Gift of 1619 he [Wotton] was given by Buckingham the important reversion of the Mastership of the Rolls'. (Shakeshaft 1979, p. 21 and 9, n.4, discussing BL Harl. MS 581, f. 214). The New Years Gift alluded to here, 'an assortment of flattering opinions offered to a patron', is addressed to Lord Treasurer Weston and not to Buckingham, and clearly relates to January 1620 and not January 1619.

[107] McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 285–287: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 25 January 1620.

[108] *CSPD 1619–1623*, p. 151, 12 June 1620.

[109] McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 307–309: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 28 June 1620.

[110] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 167.

ing to Venice, since it showed that, despite securing the favorite's support, he had not advanced his career at all.

His mission to Germany was doomed from the start, but the ambassador did not have the political sense to realize this. His attempts to persuade the Emperor Ferdinand not to make war against Bohemia became increasingly futile once Habsburg forces had defeated Frederick's army at the battle of the White Mountain (November 1620) and had proceeded to invade the Palatinate. Wotton arrived in Venice in March 1621 to find that his country's prestige had suffered irreparable damage as a result of James I's feeble diplomacy and his failure to adequately support his daughter and son-in-law. English interests in the Republic, however, were ill-served by Wotton's failure to appear before the doge and Venetian cabinet for months at a time during his third and final embassy. After only three weeks in Venice, Wotton left for Padua and did not bother to attend the Venetian cabinet until the last day of the year. Yet if the three years of Wotton's embassy were characterized by general lethargy and indolence where his ambassadorial responsibilities were concerned, he demonstrated a degree of initiative on the artistic front which was similar to that he had shown during his first embassy of 1604–1610.

Significantly, Wotton was in contact, seemingly for the first time, with the Netherlandish merchant Daniel Nijs, who had been instrumental earlier in putting together and dispatching Carleton's assignment of paintings and sculptures to the Earl of Somerset in 1615. Within two weeks of his arrival, Wotton wrote to Carleton to 'give your Lordp many thancks for a large letter received here from you by the meanes of Daniel Nuis, whose conveyance I use in the present', and in a second letter, three months letter, Wotton again referred to receiving 'youre letters (…) sent me very late by Daniel Niece this Friday nighte'.[111] Nijs may well have been the source of some of the 'many' pictures which Wotton was to proffer Buckingham over the next three years. In March 1621, the ambassador sent gifts 'of two boxes of poor things' to his new patron, though these appear not to

[111] NASP 99/23/154, Wotton to Carleton, Venice, 16 March 1621 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2 pp. 208–210) and NASP 99/23/194, Wotton to Carleton, Venice, 8 June 1621. Although Daniel Nijs subsequently claimed, in 1635, that he had 'for many years (…) served ambassadors at Venice, Wotton, Carleton, Wake and my Lord Carlisle' he failed to give any details of the services provided to Wotton (Sainsbury 1959, p. 339). The two letters from Wotton to Carleton cited above are the first documentary evidence of any contact between Wotton and Nijs.

have consisted of paintings but items of a culinary nature. Claiming that he was 'not able to reach unto anything proportionate' to the latter's dignity, he nevertheless chose to send him the 'two boxes (…) which because they require a little explication (…) I have desired Mr Nicholas Pey, one of the clerks of his Majesty's kitchen (…) to acquaint your Lordship with a note of them'.[112]

Wotton's efforts to ingratiate himself with his new patron bore fruit, since in January 1622 the favorite wrote to inform the ambassador that he had tried to arrange an exchange of office between Lionel Cranfield, who held a major post in the royal administration as the Master of King's Wards, and Sir Julius Caesar, the Master of the Rolls. Buckingham had hoped to let Wotton choose whether to take the reversion to the Wards instead of that to the Rolls but, as the exchange had fallen through, he would have to stick to his reversion of the Rolls. Buckingham's support here seems to have been the reward for presents which Wotton had made to the favorite, since in the postscript of his letter, Buckingham thanked him 'for the bed and pictures and other present you sent me, and for your good husbandry in the other pictures you bought for me'.[113] However, Wotton was clearly looking for something more from Buckingham, since his reply, albeit graciously phrased, made it clear that 'if it shall please you therein to grant me any part of mine owne humour then I would rather wish some other satisfaction then exchange of office: yet even [in] this point likewise I shall depende on yr will'. As an inducement to Buckingham to make further efforts on his behalf, Wotton revealed that he had 'committed to my foresaid nephew some memorials touching yr Lordp's familiar service (as I may terme it) in matter of art and delight'.[114]

His best efforts, however, seem to have been held back for a consignment of three paintings which he sent Buckingham six months later in December 1622, and which he described in uncharacteristic detail, perhaps because his patron was apparently paying for them himself. The choice of pictures had clearly been the subject of some discussion with the favorite. 'Now touching yr Lordp's familiar service as I may terme it, I have sent the complement of youre bargayne, uppon the

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[112] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 211–212: Wotton to Buckingham, Venice, 16 March (?)1621.

[113] Quoted in Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 243, n.1.

[114] BL, Harl. MS 581, f. 220, Wotton to Buckingham, 29 July 1622 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 242–244).

best provided and best manned shipp that hath been heere in long tyme, cal[l]ed the *Phoenix*. And indeed the cause of theire longe staye hath been for some such vessel as I might trust. Aboute which[,] since I wrote last to yr Lord I resolved to fall back to my first choice; so as now the one piece is the worck of Titian: wherein the least figure (namely the childe in the Virgin's lapp playing with a bird) is alone worthe the price of youre expense for all foure, being so rounde, that I knowe not whether I shall call it a piece of sculpture or picture'.[115] The second picture was 'of Palma [Giovane], and this I call the speaking piece, as yr Lord will saye it may well be termed[,] for except the Damsel brought to David whom a silent modestie did best become all the other figures are in discourse and in action.[116] They come both distended in theire frames for I durst not hazard them in rolls: the youngest being 25 years old and therefore no longer supple and pliant. With them I have been bold to send a [picture of a] dish of grapes to yr noble sister, the Countesse of Denbigh[117] presenting them first to yr Lordps view that you may be pleased to pass youre censure whether Italians can make frutes [*i.e.* fruits] as well as Flamings, which is the common glorie of theire pensils'.[118]

In the postscript to the same letter Wotton added that, 'It is one of my duties to tell yr Lord that I have sent a servant of mine by profession a paynter to make a searche in the best townes through Italie for some principal pieces: which I hope may produce somewhat for your Lords contentment and service'.[119] Wotton had doubtless become rather defensive after Buckingham had dispatched Balthazar Gerbier, the keeper of his collection, on a trip to Italy in 1621 to augment his

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[115] The painting is probably a *Madonna and Child and St Dorothy* produced by Titian's workshop rather than being an autograph piece. See Wethey 1969, vol. 1, pp. 64–65 quoted in Curzon 2003, p. 115.

[116] The picture by Giovane Palma is the *King David in his old age* listed in the Buckingham inventories of 1635 and 1648.

[117] Susanna Villiers was the wife of Sir William Fielding, created Earl of Denbigh in 1622. The latter was to be painted by van Dyck, in a landscape, wearing a pink silk Indian jacket and pyjamas. The picture may have been commissioned by, or given to the Marquis of Hamilton, who married Denbigh's daughter: Millar 1982, p. 56.

[118] BL Harl. MS 581, f. 222, Wotton to Buckingham, 2 December 1622 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 256–258).

[119] Pearsall Smith conjectures that the 'paynter' may have been Daniel Nijs but, in fact, Nijs was never an artist (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 258.) Jacobsen's (2003, p. 67) suggestion of the Bolognese artist Odoarto Fialetti also appears unconvincing. Shakeshaft 1979, p. 9, n.8, is more plausible in proposing Mark Bilford, who may have rejoined Wotton's service on the death of Prince Henry in 1612.

collection with further purchases, implying that Wotton's efforts were not sufficient on his behalf. After first visiting Rome, Gerbier arrived in Venice, where he managed to buy three paintings by Jacopo and Francesco Bassano, Tintoretto's *The Woman taken in Adultery*, and his greatest acquisition, Titian's *Ecce Homo*, for which he paid the enormous sum of £275. He was assisted in his artistic dealings by Daniel Nijs, who had lent Gerbier £151-10s to supplement the £500 in letters of exchange provided by Buckingham.[120]

Unlike his colleagues Dudley Carleton and William Trumbull, Wotton surprisingly failed to provide any works of art for Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, the only true aristocratic connoisseur at the English court. Wotton's third embassy, however, coincided with the period in which the earl's wife, Aletheia Talbot, took up residence in 1620 at the Palazzo Mocenigo on the Grand Canal, in order to supervise the Catholic education of her two eldest sons at the university in Padua. Unfortunately for the countess, in April 1622, Antonio Foscarini, a Venetian statesman and former ambassador to England, was arrested and accused of betraying state secrets to foreign powers. Rumors began to spread, and one that became generally believed was that the secrets had been disclosed at the Palazzo Mocenigo, and that Lady Arundel was a key figure in the conspiracy. As the countess was the foremost female figure at the English court, Wotton, as ambassador, should have taken up her cause immediately with the doge. Instead, he waited a fortnight before revealing to Lady Arundel what was being said and then advised her to leave Venice straightaway before a sentence of banishment was delivered. Doubtless, as Howarth has argued, Wotton found the 'larger than life presence' of the countess 'profoundly disagreeable' and he seized on the chance to get rid of her.[121] Wotton, however, had badly misjudged Talbot, who descended on the doge the next morning, only to be reassured by him that there was no question of her involvement in the affair and that she would always be a welcome visitor to the Venetian Republic. Not surpris-

[120] See, for example, Betcherman 1961 and 1970. Betcherman 1961, pp. 329–330, maintains that 'the English ambassador [in Venice] Sir Henry Wotton could not do enough for the confidential agent of the Marquis of Buckingham. He laid the entire resources of his embassy at Gerbier's feet'. While this may be true there is no documentary evidence to support it. For Nijs and Gerbier see also chapters 6 and 8.

[121] Howarth 1998, pp. 128–129. Howarth 1985, p. 198, maintains that 'Arundel had never trusted Sir Henry Wotton' but fails to produce any evidence to support this claim.

ingly, future relations between the Arundels and Wotton 'were always to remain cold' as a result of Wotton's 'decidely dubious part' in the affair.[122]

Early in 1623, Wotton applied, through the intercession of Buckingham, for leave of absence to 'return home for a while'.[123] His request was granted and in July he presented his letter of recall to the Venetian doge and cabinet, his first appearance before them for seven months since 31 December 1622. Before he could take his formal leave, however, the doge, Antonio Priuli, died and Wotton was obliged to remain in the Republic until September 1623 in order to congratulate his successor, Francesco Contarini, on his election. Wotton informed Secretary Calvert that he was 'confident in his Majesty's goodness, that till I have some means to live at home he will tolerate my weakness abroad' and he advised the doge and cabinet that he was hopeful of returning to Venice once more.[124] In reality, Wotton must have realized that his prospects of securing any advancement in England were slight, and, while journeying home via Cologne, he took the occasion to proffer the favorite another gift, which was clearly designed to bring himself once more to Buckingham's notice. Saluting the latter 'with a few perambulatorie lines to congratulat with you in the true and bounden zeale of my hart bothe for your honors received from home while you were abroade, and for youre retourne agayne'[125] he humbly beseeched Buckingham 'among the acclamations and joyes of youre servants to give me leave to expresse mine with a poore present in mater of art which I have gleaned on the way (…) I hope not altogether unworthie for the kinde of handling of some little corner among your nobler delights'.[126]

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[122] Howarth 1985, pp. 198–199. Lady Arundel subsequently left Venice in November 1622 with van Dyck among her entourage. The artist had arrived in the Venetian Republic two months earlier. She traveled to Mantua, where the Grand Chancellor Alessandro Striggi approached her about the possible purchase of paintings from the Mantuan collection, before moving on to Milan and Turin on the route back to England. See Brown 1982, pp. 61–62.

[123] NASP 99/25/31, Wotton to Calvert, Venice, 4 April 1623 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 266–267).

[124] NASP 99/25/94, Wotton to Calvert, Venice, 13 September 1623 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 279).

[125] Buckingham had been elevated to a dukedom while in Spain to advance the marriage of Charles, Prince of Wales, to the Infanta Maria.

[126] BL, Harl. MS 1581, f. 216, Wotton to Buckingham, 5 November 1623 (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 282).

On arriving home Wotton soon learnt that Sir Isaac Wake, Carleton's former secretary in Venice, had been appointed as his own successor as ambassador to the Republic. In desperation for his future, Wotton appealed to Buckingham for his 'care and compassion':

> I am told (I know not how truly) that his Matie hath already disposed of the Venetian Ambassadge to Sir Isaake Wake (…) that which herein doeth touche me[,] I am loathe to saye in point of reputation (…) is that theareby after seaventeen yeares of foreygn service in continual imployment [,] eather ordinarie or extraordinarie[,] I am left utterly destitute of all possibilitie to subsist at home: much like those seal fishes, which sometime[,] as they saye[,] oversleeping themselves in an ebbing water feele nothing aboute them but a drie shoare when they awake'.[127]

The appeal was not without some success, since John Chamberlain reported on 31 January 1624 that 'yt was saide last weeke he [*i.e.* Wotton] shold be prevost of Eton', a post vacant since the death of Thomas Murray in April 1623, awaiting Buckingham's return from Spain.[128] To increase his chances of securing the Eton provostship, Wotton made another timely gift of paintings to Buckingham, who now dominated the patronage system and who, it was clear, would make the final decision over the appointment. As Carleton's nephew and namesake related, 'the speech goes that Sir Henry Wotton hath lately presented my Ld of Buckingham wth a great many curious pictures, wch some will have as a sign that he is assured to have it [*i.e.* Eton]'.[129] To impress his contemporaries with his scholarly suitability for Eton, Wotton also chose this moment to present copies of his recently completed volume, *The Elements of Architecture*, to the king, Prince Charles, Buckingham, the Lord Treasurer (Lionel Cranfield) and to the Archbishop of Canterbury.[130] The initiative bore fruit, since on 15 July Carleton's nephew was able to confirm that 'Sir Henry

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[127] BL Harl. MS 1581, f. 224, Wotton to Buckingham, (? January 1624), (Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 283–284).

[128] NASP 14/158/72, Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 31 January 1624 (McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 540–544). The fullest account of the manoeuvrings for the Eton provostship during 1623–1624, for which Dudley Carleton was one of the leading candidates in Hill 1999, pp. 168–179. The major obstacle to a quick appointment to the office was that Buckingham had given a promise of the provostship to Sir William Beecher and the latter was very reluctant to part with the office to any other of the contenders, who also included Sir Robert Ayton and Francis Bacon.

[129] NASP 14/161/149, Dudley Carleton the Younger to Carleton, London, 28 March 1624.

[130] The book was largely based, as Wotton acknowledged, on Vitrivius and Leon

Wotton hath at last gotten the Prevostship of Eton'.[131] On the orders of the king, Wotton was duly elected ten days later on 25 July.

At some other point in 1624, Wotton, through the agency of his nephew, Sir Albertus Morton, also presented Buckingham with the 'design', or plans, of Caprarola, the Farnese villa between Viterbo and Rome, built by Giacomo da Vignola.[132] This has led Edward Chaney to assert that Henry Wotton's 'gift of a great many pictures and plans of Caprarola [to Buckingham] helped obtain him the Provostship of Eton'.[133] In fact, the explanation for Wotton's success in acquiring Eton appears to have been more prosaic. As I have argued elsewhere, gifts were designed to keep the client in the foreground of his patron's consciousness, and, while the failure to make appropriate offerings might lessen a client's chances of preferment, they were not in themselves a guarantee of securing public office. When Buckingham chose men to whom to give his backing, he did so for a number of reasons, among which the degree to which they had or had not presented him with gifts of works of art ranked low.[134] Buckingham appears to have appointed Wotton partly because he felt a genuine compassion for an impoverished old man but also because he could do so, without his honor being affected, in circumstances financially advantageous to himself. As Wotton himself explained to the king, five years later in February 1629, 'I had (…) two hopes in reversion. The first (…) a Six Clerk's place in Chancery. The next, of the office of the Rolls itself. The first of these I was forced to yield to Sir William Beecher, upon the late Duke of Buckingham's former engagement unto him by promise (…) and that was as much in value as my Provostship were worth at a market. The other of the reversion of the Rolls I surrendered to the said Duke

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Battista Alberti. It nevertheless has the distinction of being the first book on the theory of architecture to be written in English. (See, for example, Harris 1990).

[131] NASP 84/118/190, Dudley Carleton the Younger to Carleton, London, 15 July 1624.

[132] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 286: Wotton to Sir Albertus Morton, (? December) 1624. The letter contains the date of 'this Tuesday morning 1624'. Pearsall Smith conjectures that the missing month is December 1624, which would appear correct, since in the autumn of 1624 it became common knowledge that Buckingham was making alterations to his London residence of York House and at this point Morton was being considered for the Secretaryship, left vacant after the resignation of Calvert. Presenting Buckingham with the plans of Caprarola would have been a timely way of ingratiating himself with the duke. Morton was duly appointed secretary by the king in January 1625.

[133] Chaney 1998, pp. 211–212.

[134] Hill 2003, p. 222.

(…) upon his own very instant motion (the said Duke then intending it upon the now Attorney, Sir Robert Heath), though with serious promise, upon his honour, that he would procure me some equivalent recompense before any other should be settled in the place'.[135] The loser in all these complicated maneuverings by the favorite had been Wotton himself. He had given up to the favorite both his reversions to the Chancery and to the Rolls. Sir William Beecher had surrendered his claims to Eton but, according to Chamberlain, had profited from the transaction since he made £2,500 from the deal.[136] The real winner, however, was Buckingham who had exchanged two minor offices but had kept the reversion of the Rolls 'for which there were those that already offered him £5,000', and which he was extremely anxious to give or sell to the Attorney General, Sir Robert Heath.[137] Buckingham also never provided Wotton with the 'recompense' he had personally promised him in 1624, a matter to which Wotton brought the king's attention in his letter of 1629, quoted above, written at a respectful interval after the favorite's assassination in August 1628.[138]

At the age of 56, Wotton had at last achieved minor office in England, but his expenses from Venice were greatly in arrears and he was too poor even to furnish his own rooms at Eton. Circumstances did not improve when on two occasions in 1629 and 1631 he suffered the indignity of being arrested for debt. Despite being given promises of a pension of £500 by the crown in both of these years, neither pension was ever paid.[139] Wotton's contribution to art collecting in England was clearly over by 1624, though he did make one final visit to Whitehall in 1631 to give his judgment to the king on some newly arrived pictures.[140]

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[135] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 315–316: Wotton to King Charles I, Whitehall, 12 February 1629.

[136] McClure 1939, vol. 2, pp. 569–573: Chamberlain to Carleton, London, 24 July 1624: 'Sir William Beecher (…) is to have £2.500 upon the fall of the first of the sixe clarkes in recompense for Eton'.

[137] NASP 14/162/13, Dudley Carleton the Younger to Carleton, London, 4 April 1624.

[138] Sir Robert Heath seems to have resigned the reversion to the Rolls at this time and in the following year it was granted to Sir Dudley Digges. Wotton requested that the king 'will be pleased in disposing of the Rolls (to which I was assigned) to reserve for me some small proportion towards the discharge of such debts as I have contracted in public service, yet remaining upon interest'.

[139] Curzon 2003, pp. 253 and 264.

[140] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, p. 210: Sir Thomas Culpepper to Sir Francis Nethersole, 14 February 1631.

What, then, had been Wotton's role in the increased interest in works of art displayed at the early Stuart court? As already noted, like other ambassadors of the period, he did not have the financial resources to acquire an important collection of his own and those pictures he owned at the time of his death were few in number and not of any major significance.[141] He was, nevertheless, the first Jacobean ambassador to appreciate the role that the presentation of works of art could play in promoting his career, an example which Carleton, his successor in Venice, was to follow, though only belatedly after spending several years in the Venetian Republic. Both Wotton and Carleton were fortunate in being posted to Venice at a time when Venetian pictures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were becoming increasingly appreciated and valued at court. Wotton seemingly made an important contribution to this process. The pictures which he sent as a gift to Salisbury in 1607 and 1608 were among the earliest Venetian paintings to arrive in the country and, arguably, provided an example which Prince Henry, surrounded by his well-traveled advisers, was keen to follow,[142] even though Sir Roy Strong maintains that the major Italian influence at the prince's court was Florentine rather than Venetian.[143] Wotton, in addition, seems to have been the agency through which not only the prince but also the Earl of Northampton received pictures from the Republic in 1610. He may also have provided artistic advice to Salisbury's heir, Viscount Cranborne, on the latter's visit to the Veneto in December 1610. On his return to England at the beginning of 1611, Wotton's influence in artistic matters was at its height and he seems to have provided an aesthetic lead at court, presenting pictures to Prince Henry and arguably also to the queen and to Sir Henry Fanshawe. Once his career had peaked, however, with the deaths of Salisbury and Prince Henry in May and December

[141] Wotton's will of 1637: Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 1, pp. 216–219. Wotton left to Charles I five paintings by the Bolognese artist Odoarto Fialetti, as well as a portrait of a doge, 'done either by Titiano or some principal hand', now regarded as a copy of Titian's portrait of *Doge Andrea Gritti*. To the future Charles II he bequeathed a portrait of Elizabeth of Bohemia by Gerrit van Honthorst. He also left to the Bishop of London 'a picture of Heraclytus bewailing and Democritus laughing at the world' and to Sir Francis Windebank *The Four Seasons* by Jacopo Bassano, with characteristic instructions that it should be hung 'near the eye in his Parlour'.

[142] For the advisers at Prince Henry's court: Strong 1986, pp. 26–54. Strong emphasizes, on p. 27, that Henry's court was made up of 'men who had travelled and often resided abroad for considerable lengths of time, above all in France and Italy'.

[143] Strong 1986, pp. 13 and 136.

1612, his influence in the artistic sphere declined considerably. He went on to make some small contribution in 1615 to the collection of the Earl of Somerset, before the latter's impeachment in 1616, but he was to be strangely inactive in the aesthetic field during his second embassy to Venice of 1616–1619. Furthermore, as already indicated, he made no effort to cultivate the important figure of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. After his visit to Heidelberg in 1616, Wotton maintained a long correspondence with his 'Mistress', the Protestant heroine, Princess Elizabeth.[144] It would therefore be surprising if he did not make some contribution at some point to her picture collection. Although he became more interventionist during his final embassy of 1621–1623, sending gifts of paintings to the new favorite Buckingham, the number of pictures he sent was insignificant in the overall context of the latter's collection, which embraced several hundred pictures. In the last analysis, Wotton's *raison d'etre* for presenting pictures to his patrons had been to advance his career and in this he essentially failed. After spending most of his life in the Venetian Republic during the twenty-year period of 1604–1624 Wotton returned to England only to secure a minor badly paid post which worsened rather than improved his parlous financial condition.[145]

[144] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, pp. 293–297, 311–312, 325 and 362–363, surviving letters from Wotton addressed to the queen in May (?)1626, November 1628, August 1629 and July 1636.

[145] In this way Wotton's career was similar to that of his colleague William Trumbull, the English agent in Brussels after 1609, who had also presented works of art to his patrons but had returned to England, unrewarded by the Crown, in 1624. Wotton's career differed from that of his contemporary Sir Dudley Carleton, who was, in contrast, able to use his two embassies to Venice and The Hague as the launching pad to a successful career in England. This success, however, was not the result of his attempts to use artistic gifts to advance his career but sprang from the fact that Carleton was much more politically accomplished than Wotton and therefore much more capable of carrying out the responsibilities of senior office. For a consideration of the role of works of art in advancing the careers of Trumbull and Carleton see Hill 2003, pp. 211–228.

CHAPTER THREE

GIOVANNI ANDREA DORIA: CITIZEN OF GENOA, PRINCE OF MELFI, AGENT OF KING PHILIP II OF SPAIN

Thomas Kirk

Giovanni Andrea Doria (1539–1606) was a prominent citizen of the Republic of Genoa as well as Prince of Melfi in the kingdom of Naples. A subject of King Philip II of Spain, King of Naples, Doria was also bound to the Spanish crown through a contractual relationship as naval *condottiero*, hiring out a number of his vessels to the Spanish and commanding a squadron of galleys on behalf of the king. In this capacity he was very clearly an agent of the King of Spain.

Given the importance of the term 'agent' in this as in all the contributions to this volume, a clear definition of just how the word is used here is in order. Clearly the standard definition of 'one (…) who acts for another' applies to Doria's contractual relationship with Philip II; Doria provided, commanded and equipped a naval squadron on behalf of the king, following the king's orders regarding the use of the squadron.[1] Much honing of that general definition of the agent is necessary, though, regarding both the mechanisms through which agents were able to perform the tasks assigned to them and by which they maintained or furthered their social condition at the same time. As outlined by Marika Keblusek, both of these things depended on the agent's ability to develop and fruitfully use a network or networks.[2] Such networks are usually associated with the gathering of information, although, as we will see in the case of Giovanni Andrea Doria, they could also perform an exquisitely political function as well. In fact, an examination of the role played by Doria in the sixteenth-century Spanish system of states in the Mediterranean, coupled with the analysis of the wide variety of types and examples of agency presented in this volume,

[1] *OED* at the entry 'agent': '4.a. Of persons: One who does the actual work of anything, as distinguished from the instigator or employer; hence, one who acts for another, a deputy, steward, factor, substitute, representative, or emissary'.

[2] Keblusek 2006, pp. 13–14.

could lead to an appreciation of the phenomenon of agency permeating early modern society, perhaps even the fundamental organizational principle of that society.

Giovanni Andrea Doria's great uncle, the famous Genoese admiral and naval *condottiero* Andrea Doria, had designated his nephew, Giannettino Doria (Giovanni Andrea's father), as his heir and successor. The position to be inherited was a multi-faceted one; not only did Andrea Doria control a private squadron of naval vessels which he kept hired out to the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, but the clout that accompanied control of the fleet and the relationship with Charles V gave Doria a prominent position in Genoese politics. An attempted *coup* in 1547, however, altered the elder Doria's plans. In that year Gian Luigi Fieschi, exponent of a rival noble Genoese family, attempted to gain control of the city with the intention of ousting the Doria and placing the city under the protection of Francis I of France. The *coup* attempt failed and Fieschi drowned. Fully clad in armor, he slipped into the waters of the port while trying to take possession of the Doria warships. Giannettino Doria, however, was also killed in the fighting. Thus Giannettino Doria's son, Giovanni Andrea Doria, also known as Gian Andrea, became the designated heir to his great uncle Andrea Doria. Andrea Doria's relationship to Charles V, as mercenary naval commander, had enabled him to bring the Republic of Genoa into the orbit of the Holy Roman Empire and to become guarantor for the city's allegiance to Habsburg, Spain. Giovanni Andrea Doria would perform the same role during the reigns of Philip II and Philip III. Since the initial system and web of relationships used by Giovanni Andrea Doria was a development of the one created by Andrea Doria, let us examine briefly the network created by the elder Doria.

Born into one of the less influential branches of a powerful family, Andrea Doria gained notoriety as a mercenary and eventually as a naval commander. During the tumultuous Italian Wars of the early sixteenth century, Doria commanded vessels and then squadrons of galleys for the Republic of Genoa and for the Papacy before entering the service of Francis I of France. The defining move of his political career, however, came when his contractual relationship with Francis I expired during Francis' bid to reconquer Naples in 1528. Doria left the service of the French and entered that of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, thus depriving Francis of naval coverage and dooming his Neapolitan campaign to failure. Doria then occupied his native Genoa and enforced a series of political reforms, thus creating a newfound

internal stability while bringing the Republic under the sway of the Habsburgs.

As guarantor of the Republic's new constitutional structure, and therefore of its internal stability, and as commander of the Habsburgs' naval forces in the Mediterranean, Doria himself became the linchpin of a complex series of bonds between the city of Genoa and Charles V. As part of his contractual relationship with the emperor, Doria was given the right to export grain from Sicily, but, more importantly, he was also given discretionary power to choose which Genoese financiers to introduce to the Spanish court. Genoese bankers quickly gained ascendancy over crown finances and Doria's control over access to this extremely lucrative field of endeavor allowed him to create a powerful clientele structure among the city's elite.[3] In a similar manner, his control over a fleet of galleys allowed for the creation of another clientele structure, which overlapped to some degree with the financial one. Doria was in a position to confer positions of military command on his galleys, thus providing members of his clientele network with a degree of prestige that was otherwise difficult to obtain in the Republic. In short, Andrea Doria was able to make himself the focal point of relations between the Republic of Genoa and the Habsburg monarchy. Through his control of the galleys and the Spanish troops they carried on board he guaranteed Charles V's control of the city and the essential sea and land routes connecting Spain with the Habsburg's Italian territories of Milan and Naples. He was also able to introduce to Charles V men with the financial know-how and the capital needed to keep the far-flung Habsburg Empire functioning. Seen from another point of view, however, it was precisely Doria's relationship with Charles V that allowed him to guarantee a degree of independence and stability in the Republic, while at the same time providing lucrative opportunities and positions of prestige to his own clients. This won him widespread support within the city and the Republic of Genoa.

The constitutional reforms enacted in 1528 were not sufficient, however, to resolve centuries of internal conflict within Genoese society.

[3] In the twelve-year period running from 1520–1532, Genoese financiers loaned Charles V 1,826,673 ducats representing 34% of all loans made to the Habsburg monarch in that period. Average profits on those loans was 14.96%, in other words 273,270 ducats or 12.16 quintals of gold. In 1552–56 the Genoese lent the crown more money than all other groups combined: 4,901,214 ducats representing 50.8% of all loans and yielding 67.41% profits, 3,303,697 ducats or 147.03 quintals of gold. See in general Carande 1943–1967; Doria 1986, p. 68; and Lapeyre 1983, pp. 149 and 152.

The medieval city state had been riddled with factional divisions, making it one of the least stable of the Italian states. Not only was the populace divided into the usual factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, but also into Blacks and Whites and into supporters of either the Adorno or the Fregoso, two families that had come to monopolize the office of doge, the head of state. The most important division, however, was that dividing the commoners from the nobles. The nomenclature here, though, can be misleading; the nobles not only comprised the feudal nobility of the surrounding countryside, but also the descendants of anyone who had sat on the Council of Elders or held the office of consul. When a power-sharing agreement was reached in the late thirteenth century, some families, who had previously been called 'nobles', switched their allegiance and joined the ranks of the 'commoners'. To complicate things further, among the commoners a rift separated wealthy merchants from shopkeepers and artisans. At the same time tension also existed among the 'nobles' between the landed nobility and those whose 'nobility' stemmed from holding office in the medieval commune. These were the principal divisions addressed by the reforms of 1528.[4]

The reforms combined the pre-existing factions of the nobles and commoners into a single ruling class, giving the title of noble to all, but the old divisions reemerged soon thereafter under the denominations of the new and old nobility.[5] Doges were elected to two-year terms of office and a tacit accord was reached between the factions whereby a doge of one faction was to be succeeded by a doge of the other; in other words a doge from the new nobility was succeeded by one from the old nobility and vice versa. Within the ranks of the two principal factions, then, offices were shared out along the lines of the internal divisions among the new nobility, between the wealthy merchants and those of craft or shopkeeping origins. The same was true of the old nobility; offices were distributed among members of the so-called 'quattro casate' or four principal houses of the feudal nobility on the one hand (the Doria, Spinola, Grimaldi and Fieschi extended families), and the 'tetti appesi', all the other families of the old nobility on the other. It was from this latter division that the only real challenge

[4] On the complex factional divisions within the Republic of Genoa see Kirk 2005, pp. 22–25; Petti Balbi 1991, pp. 34–35 and Vitale 1955, vol. 1, pp. 17, 29 and 91.

[5] For an extensive analysis of the 1528 reforms see Pacini 1990.

to Andrea Doria's dominance of the city came. The motives behind Gian Luigi Fieschi's failed *coup* attempt should be sought either in the realm of frustrated ambitions to dominate the city, or perhaps even in that of personal rivalry. At any rate the *coup* attempt thrust the young Giovanni Andrea Doria into the arena of Genoese and international politics. The most direct results of Gian Luigi Fieschi's attempted takeover was a law known as the Garibetto that tightened Andrea Doria's control over the highest levels of the government, and of course the death of Doria's designated heir, his nephew and adopted son, Giannettino Doria, father of Giovanni Andrea Doria. Gian Andrea was eight years old at the time, and from that moment onwards he was groomed intensely for the role reserved for him.

Strictly within the realm of Genoese politics, while enhancing control over the composition of the highest ruling councils within the government, the Garibetto reform accentuated tension between the rival old and new nobility. In practice, half of all key seats were reserved for members of each of the two factions. This, however, favored the old nobility, which was numerically inferior and hence over-represented. For nearly thirty years this law was the focal point of a great deal of internal debate and political strife. Two elements of the law came to be contested more and more vehemently. First of all, eligibility for the highest councils of the Republic's government was determined by the standing members of those councils, thus creating a sort of short circuit at the highest levels; standing council members were, in effect, able to determine to a large degree who would succeed them. Second, dividing offices equally between old and new nobles caused resentment among the new nobles simply because there were many more of them. Many new nobles came to feel that they should be given more seats in government due to their greater numbers. New nobles faced greater competition within their own faction for positions of power than their old noble counterparts. A result of all this was that Andrea Doria's role as arbiter of Genoese politics, a role earmarked for the young Giovanni Andrea, became all the more important.

In marked contrast to expectations, Giovanni Andrea's military career did not get off to a brilliant start. During his first voyage as commander of a squadron of galleys in 1556 at the age of sixteen, all but one of his ships were wrecked along the coast of Corsica. Commander of the Genoese squadron at the Battle of Djerba in 1560, he escaped with only four of his own eleven galleys while only one other Genoese

galley escaped. The Turkish fleet managed to destroy or capture an even greater proportion of the Spanish vessels, but the disastrous defeat contributed to Doria's growing reputation as unlucky. Andrea Doria died that same year; Giovanni Andrea inherited his role in Genoa and command of the Genoese squadron, but not the elder Doria's position as commander of all Spanish naval forces in the Mediterranean.

In the years immediately after Djerba, in the wars against Siena, Pope Paul IV and in relief of the Turkish siege of Malta, Doria's contributions to the Spanish war efforts lay primarily in the transport of Spanish troops to the various theaters of war. He also accepted command of the Republic of Genoa's naval forces in 1561 and 1565 during the efforts to put down a rebellion in Corsica, then under Genoese control.

Doria reentered the mainstream of Mediterranean history with the war for Cyprus and the naval campaign culminating in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Doria's behavior drew criticism again on this occasion. When he refused to sail from Sicily with the rest of the fleet in 1570, claiming that it was too late in the season for such an extended voyage, he was accused of wanting to undermine the entire undertaking. He was, however, the only one to preserve his fleet intact as each of the other squadrons lost a number of vessels to inclement weather. His conduct in the culminating battle a year later was also criticized at the time, and has been debated ever since. Ostensibly fearing a Turkish flanking maneuver, he drew his squadron away from the main body of the Holy League's fleet. While he claimed to have saved the day by averting potential disaster, his detractors accused him of cowardice and of wanting to keep clear of the most intense fighting.

Quite apart from tactics and official naval campaigns though, Doria was successful enough in one field of endeavor to amass a fortune: piracy. The Spanish were notoriously slow in honoring their contractual commitments and there were interminable delays in payment of Doria himself, payments for the hire and provisioning of his galleys and the payment of his crews.[6] Such delays led him to seek alternative sources of income, and privateering forays in the eastern Mediterranean proved to be the most lucrative.

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[6] In 1552, for example, Andrea Doria had only been able to collect 96,170 of the 123,000 ducats owed him and in 1588 the ten galleys contracted out to Cosma Centurione, Agapito Grillo, and Giovanni Antonio De Marini had accumulated 200,000 ducats in arrears. See Grendi 1987, p. 154; Kirk 2005, pp. 41–44 and Thompson 1976, p. 177.

Finally, before taking a closer look at the patron-agent relationship that bound Giovanni Andrea Doria to King Philip II of Spain, one last episode of Genoese history should be discussed. In 1575 civil war broke out in Genoa between the rival factions of the old and new nobility. As mentioned earlier, tensions had been growing due to the inequality of representation stemming from the Garibetto reform of 1547, but perhaps more importantly the two factions were identified with differing economic interests. Ever since Andrea Doria had aligned the city with the House of Habsburg, Genoese financiers had become increasingly involved in the economic machinery of the Habsburg lands, reaping enormous profits. Andrea Doria first and then Giovanni Andrea Doria were the link with court, the ones who introduced bankers to the monarch, and they introduced almost exclusively bankers from the old nobility, their own faction. The new nobles, on the other hand, were identified more with trade and manufacturing than finance. Many of them, however, had also invested large sums of money with the old noble financiers. Presumably jealousy over the profits made by these old noble bankers contributed to the animosity between the two factions.[7] When the new nobles took control of the city in March, the old nobility turned to Giovanni Andrea Doria as their natural leader. Doria in turn was successful in maintaining control of nearly all Genoese territory outside the city itself and in preventing the republican squadron (in the hands of the new nobility) from even leaving the city's port. His hands, however, had not been entirely free in conducting the war effort. Since the galleys that Doria owned himself, as well as the other galleys of the old nobility under his command had been hired out to the King of Spain, technically he was not allowed to use them without authorization from Philip II. For his part, the Spanish king only assented to use of the ships in the civil war on 13 September 1575, less than two weeks after declaring a *quiebra*, a default on payments forcing renegotiation of the crown's debts, most of which were owed to Genoese financiers belonging to the old nobility.

Open warfare soon gave way to negotiations and a reformed constitution was produced, the *Leges Novae* of 1576. Meanwhile, the Genoese financiers had begun drawing up new terms for repayment of the Spanish crown's debt, leading to the final agreement known as

[7] See Doria 1995, pp. 160–163. See also Savelli 1981.

the *Medio General* in 1578. After this point, bankers belonging to the new nobility were also active at court.[8]

With stability reestablished in Genoa, in 1582 Doria was able to sell ten of his twelve galleys to the King of Spain.[9] Doria continued to operate and command these vessels, but he now leased them from Philip II and contracted only for their operation. In other words, the risk involved in owning warships was shifted away from the private contractor to the King of Spain. The following year he was finally given the position of General of the Sea, the title once held by Andrea Doria and one that Giovanni Andrea had pursued all his life. In 1594, then, he was made member of the Spanish *Consejo de estado*.

It is apparent that Giovanni Andrea Doria's importance to the Spanish crown did not lie primarily in his abilities as a military commander. Militarily, in fact, he could not vaunt an unblemished career of brilliant successes, though not all of his failures were necessarily to be blamed on him. Be that as it may, the Spanish were careful not to entrust him with command of their entire Mediterranean fleet until 1583 when the region seemed relatively calm and the great campaigns against the Turks had come to a close. His importance to the Spanish lay elsewhere; his agency was key to keeping Genoa firmly within the orbit of the Spanish monarchy at a time when access to the city's financial networks and enormous reserves of capital were indispensable to maintaining Spanish armies in the field in far-flung theaters of action, and to keeping the port of Genoa open for communication and the transport of men and *matériel* to Spanish Lombardy. A hostile Genoa would have made communication with the Kingdom of Naples difficult as well. The efficacy of Doria's agency and his ability to ensure Genoa's fidelity depended on two overlapping networks: one revolving around banking and financial services and one related to control of the galleys.

There were very few actual individual financiers active at court, each of whom owed the position to Doria's good graces, but they represented the tip of the iceberg of a huge machine for gathering capital from all layers of Genoese society to be invested in loans to the

[8] See Neri 1989.
[9] Savelli 1992, p. 371.

crown.[10] Thus the network not only encompassed the men at the top of the pyramid, but also the scores of bankers, intermediaries and simple investors at all levels of Genoese society. With the creation of the Piacenza exchange fairs under Genoese control in 1579, this network was broadened further to encompass investors from across Europe as well.[11] The profits to be had through this network and this activity constituted an important motive for allegiance to both Spain and Giovanni Andrea Doria. Or perhaps allegiance was prompted more through the fear that upsetting the intricate political balance could jeopardize one's investments—whichever the case, the end result was the same: an elevated degree of influence throughout Genoese society for Doria.

Control of the galleys worked in a similar manner. Apart from the obvious power that comes from keeping a squadron of warships in port at the heart of the city (usually with a complement of Spanish soldiers), control of these vessels also lent power in a much more subtle way. At a moment in history when prestige and social status came through titles, and honor and glory came through military command, the tiny Republic of Genoa offered few outlets for those of its citizens seeking such things. Doria, on the other hand, was in a position to confer positions of military command on his ships and access to the Spanish military hierarchy. We could, in fact, view this network as a sort of pyramidal structure of networks. Ships' captains appointed by Doria, or other galley owners operating under his command were in a position to appoint their own underlings, thus creating their own pyramids of allegiance. In fact, the seventeenth-century social commentator Andrea Spinola claimed that through keeping sixteen to eighteen galleys in Genoa, the King of Spain was able to hold 'the interest of a good number of nobles'.[12]

Finally, the nature of Doria's agency to the crown held yet another dimension. In all sorts of matters in which the interests of the Spanish were likely to clash with those of the Republic, or where the aspirations of each were destined to interfere with one another, Giovanni Andrea Doria was the natural spokesman for Philip II. As a citizen

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[10] Giorgio Doria counts no more than ten individual financiers active at court in Madrid between 1565 and 1575. Doria 1995, p. 164.

[11] For the clearest and most complete description of the fairs and their workings see Boyer-Xambeau/Deleplace/Gillard 1986.

[12] Spinola 1981, p. 87.

of the Republic, he was able to represent the interests of the crown without creating resentment of foreign interference, which was always a possibility when the king's desires were expressed directly by the Spanish ambassador.

An example of this activity is provided by a dispute that broke out in 1587 regarding precedence and salutes between ships. Not only did the question revolve around the relationship between Doria's vessels and those of the Republic, but Doria himself acted as spokesman for the Spanish crown. When encountering one another at sea or when entering a port, ships fired a salute in a sort of ceremonial that mirrored that of protocol at court or the meetings of ambassadors. An intricate set of rules regulated who was to salute whom; vessels of subject states saluted those of the sovereign first, ships of lesser states saluted those of greater ones and so forth. In similar fashion, when the ships of various countries operated together, their deployment was determined by an analogous set of rules.[13] The dispute in question arose when the galleys of the Republic of Genoa under the command of Francesco Grimaldi refused to salute a number of galleys of the Doria squadron under Leonardo Spinola. Grimaldi's rationale was that he represented a sovereign state and Spinola was a citizen of that state, therefore Spinola should have fired the salute first. Spinola, on the other hand, maintained that he represented the King of Spain, who held precedence over the Republic.

What today may seem an inconsequential obsession with form, typical of the baroque age, actually had considerable repercussions. Philip II claimed sovereignty over the entire western Mediterranean, including the Gulf of Genoa, while the Genoese claimed sovereignty over the Ligurian Sea, including the Gulf of Genoa and the waters between Liguria and Corsica. Firing a salute first, admitting subordinate status, would have been seen as renouncing sovereignty in favor of the other state. Through his galleys and his network of contacts (including the commanders of the various Spanish galley squadrons), Giovanni Andrea Doria actively pursued the Spanish objective of obtaining a salute from the Genoese while at the same time presenting the Spanish case before the city-state's senate.

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[13] A seventeenth-century treatise illustrating the intricate rules can be found in Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF), Carte Strozziane, I serie, 363: 'Memoria in generale, intorno a saluti che si praticano per mare (…)', ff. 154–70. See also Kirk 1996.

During the last two decades of his life, Doria's greatest rival for influence within Genoa was not an opponent of the old nobility or even anyone contesting the pro-Spanish position represented by Doria, but another Genoese playing the same game: Ambrogio Spinola, whose influence, like that of Doria, stemmed from his position within the Spanish military hierarchy and his position as commander of the Spanish forces in the Low Countries. Doria and Spinola vied with one another to place members of their own clientele network in positions of command within Genoa. In fact, the decline of Doria's influence can be dated to 1598, when Spinola was able to get his man elected doge against Doria's candidate. This of course only indicates how pervasive the system was. Doria and Spinola, both agents of Philip II, were each attempting to get their own man, their own agent elected. The new doge then, Lazzaro Grimaldi, while an agent of Ambrogio Spinola, certainly also commanded his own network and worked to place his own men in various other key positions and to influence the workings of the state at various other levels.

The life and activities of Giovanni Andrea Doria are emblematic of the methods used by Philip II to maintain control of Italy. Doria was born and died in Genoa, a citizen of the Republic of Genoa. His statue is even one of two adorning the entrance to the Ducal Palace in Genoa, in spite of the fact that he never held a political post of any kind in the Republic. In fact, the only position he ever accepted in the Republic was as a young man, when he accepted command of the city-state's naval forces during the war against Corsica in 1561 and again in 1565.

His chosen field of action was the realm of the Spanish monarchy and the horizons of his ambition were delimited by the boundaries of the Spanish Empire. He sought prestige and advancement at the Spanish court and in titles conferred by Philip II of Spain. The prestige and titles gained, then, were spent in Genoa, where the capillary clientele system he was able to assemble counted for more even than the military potential of his personal fleet of warships and the complement of Spanish soldiers that they usually carried aboard them. Just as he gained prestige and status through his relationship with Spain, other Genoese earned prestige as commanders in the Doria squadron of ships, and numerous people earned their livelihood supplying and maintaining the vessels.

Doria was also the channel through which any Genoese had to pass in order to do business with the Spanish court. The loyalty engendered

through this clientele structure, coupled with the profits to be had financing the Spanish crown, ensured Genoese loyalty to Spain even more than the squadron of ships.

For his part, then, Doria was of course an agent of the Spanish crown and carried out the military duties his office required of him. He was much more to the Spanish than merely a *condottiero*, though; he was an active force in the internal workings of the Republic of Genoa, a strategic city, and a crucial ally of the Spanish in the Mediterranean. Doria, more than the Spanish ambassador, was able to represent Spanish interests to the Republic's senate and, through his clientele system, he was able to ensure the election of pro-Spanish figures to key posts in the Republic's government. In this Doria was emblematic of a series of members of the Italian élite that the Spanish were able to coopt through the conferment of titles and offices, and who ensured Spanish control over nearly all of the Italian peninsula.[14]

[14] On Spanish efforts to coopt the élites of the Italian Peninsula, see Spagnoletti 1996.

CHAPTER FOUR

POLITICS AND LETTERS: GISBERT CUPER AS A SERVANT OF TWO REPUBLICS

Bianca Chen

The Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam holds a large, unique painting that offers a detailed overview of the ruins of the ancient city of Palmyra in modern-day Syria (Fig. 6). It is the first image of these magnificent ruins that was known to Europeans.[1] Originally, the painting belonged to Gisbert Cuper (1644–1716), a Dutch politician and antiquarian scholar who received it straight from the Middle East from Coenraad Calckberner, Dutch Consul in Aleppo (Fig. 7). From 1688 onwards, Cuper was in contact with Calckberner. They exchanged political news, but also—and to a larger extent—antiquarian information. The mutual allegiance between two professionals in politics who shared a fascination for antiquity as well—not at all uncommon in early modern Europe, as this essay will show—poses many questions about hierarchy and friendship in agency. What were, for example, the gains for both sender and receiver of letters, and were they equally distributed? Status is an important factor in relations of exchange, but did his political status influence Cuper's cultural exchanges as well? And, on a practical level, how were his separate 'professions' interrelated? Moreover, as a representative of and participant in both the Republic of Letters and the Dutch Republic, Cuper played different roles: those of patron (or maecenas), client and agent. In many cases where he can be seen as patron or client, either granting a favor or receiving one, he was actually an agent, working as an intermediary between two parties. Therefore, these different terms will be used interchangeably in this essay, according to how the subjects perceived themselves; in fact, these terms all refer to Cuper's agency in different situations.

[1] Palmyra is nowadays listed as a world heritage site by UNESCO.

Both as a scholar and a politician, Gisbert Cuper maintained a large network of correspondence. Besides Calckberner in Aleppo—on whom more at the end of this essay—there are many others to choose from, for Cuper exchanged letters with diplomats in Stockholm, Cologne, Vienna, Regensburg, Madrid, London, Brunswick, Lüneburg, Constantinople and Smyrna. In this essay, his correspondence with a selection of them will be exemplified. To start with, the next paragraph will introduce Cuper and sketch his career, in order to understand how he could, and why it was important to him to, simultaneously be an agent both in matters of politics and antiquarianism.

Gisbert Cuper was born on 28 September 1644 in the town of Hemmen in the Dutch province of Gelderland. He studied at the university in Nijmegen,[2] where he read rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, history, law and theology under the supervision of Rector Johannes Schultingh (died 1666).[3] In 1665, Cuper enrolled at Leiden University, where he studied under the supervision of the great philologist Johannes Fredericus Gronovius (1611–1671). Gronovius was soon impressed by the young Cuper, as can be witnessed by a flattering letter he wrote in 1666, recommending his pupil as successor to the deceased Schultingh in Nijmegen. Gronovius described Cuper as a young man who was gifted by nature with talent and diligence, and who was learned far beyond his years.[4]

When Cuper did not get the position in Nijmegen, he went on a *grand tour* of France and Italy, the usual way for adolescents of his social standing to conclude their studies. He stayed in Paris for a long time, but never reached the ultimate goal of his journey: Rome. His travels were interrupted because in 1668 he was appointed professor of history and eloquence at the *Athenaeum Illustre* of the city of Deventer in the eastern part of the Dutch Republic (the province of Overijssel).[5]

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[2] Between 1656 and 1679 a university was located in the city of Nijmegen: Bots/Kerkhof 2001.

[3] Veenendaal 1950, p. viii.

[4] Veenendaal 1950, p. viii: 'Civem habetis Gisbertum Cuperum, iuvenem singularibus indolis industriaeque dotibus praeditum, eruditione vero multum antecedentem ac praevenientem annos suos', ('You will have the citizen Gisbert Cuper, a young man who is gifted with extraordinary talent, inborn diligence and who truly anticipates and surpasses his years').

[5] At an *Athenaeum Illustre* students followed largely the same educational program as at a university. They could not, however, finish their studies there, since only universities had the right to give degrees.

The *Athenaeum* of Deventer was a fairly regional institute, mainly attracting students from the province of Overijssel, but a professorship there would be a good start for a later career in one of the more prestigious institutes, such as the universities of Utrecht or Leiden.[6]

Cuper excelled as a young professor at the *Athenaeum*. He soon acquired a good reputation with his students, and, in 1672, he was promoted to rector of the institute. A week after this promotion he faced a formidable crisis, however. In this 'disaster year', the Dutch Republic was attacked by an alliance formed by the French, English and German (the bishoprics of Cologne and Münster) armies. Deventer was occupied by German troops and the town converted to Catholicism once more. Cuper defended the interests of his professors and fervently protected the library collection of the *Athenaeum*, which was threatened by the newly installed orthodoxy of the Catholic ruler. This steadfast behavior during the war earned him the position of mayor (burgomaster) in the magistracy of Deventer as soon as the city was liberated from the occupying forces. Also, his marriage (1670) to Alida van Suchtelen, daughter of a powerful member of the city's magistracy, may have contributed to his rise in city politics, just as his support of William III, the new stadtholder of the Dutch Republic, who was particularly powerful in the province of Overijssel, may have done.[7] Cuper combined his new position as burgomaster with his duties at the *Athenaeum* until 1681, when the States of Overijssel designated him to the States General in The Hague, forcing him to live there most of the year.[8] After 1681, Cuper's career was thus limited to politics. He seems to have been quite ambitious in his new professional field, as Constantijn Huygens the Younger, the secretary of Stadtholder William III, reported in his diary that 'Verbolt [deputy of the province of Overijssel] and Cuyper were miserable fawners of Dijckvelt, the latter [Cuper] wishing to become Secretary of the Council of State'.[9]

Cuper's new ambitions in the Dutch Republic did not end his scholarly endeavors, however. For the rest of his life, he remained a notable member of the Republic of Letters. His valued participation in the

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[6] Bunge/Krop/Wielema 1993.
[7] Veenendaal 1950, pp. viii–x. For Cuper's Orangism: Bolkestein 2003.
[8] Veenendaal 1950, pp. viii–x.
[9] As cited in Veenendaal 1950, p. xii: 'dat Verbolt en Cuyper miserabele flickfloyers van Dijckvelt waeren, de laetste op hoop van tot het secretarisschap van den Raedt van Staten te komen'.

scholarly community was underlined by the honor bestowed on him in 1716, when he was chosen as an honorary member of the Parisian *Académie des inscriptions et belles letters*.[10] He kept up voluminous correspondence with scholars and amateurs all over Europe, read all the available learned periodicals, and at times published his own work. He was mainly devoted to antiquarianism, but also took a great interest in theology, ethnography and linguistics, disciplines that were still intrinsically linked and largely inseparable in his day. As an antiquarian scholar, he was an expert in the field of numismatics—the study of ancient coins—but he also contributed to the fields of philology and epigraphy, reading and interpreting inscriptions. Cuper's versatility is reflected in his publications, but even more so in his letters. The portions of his correspondence that crossed the border of the scholarly community into the realm of politics will be the main sources for this essay.

Cuper was not the only politician with an interest in ancient history and antiquities. His good friend Nicolaes Witsen (1664–1717) was a fanatic collector of almost everything related to human culture and nature; apart from coins, gems and other antique monuments, he had acquired scale models of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, baptismal shells from Amboine, Chinese manuscripts, Siberian fossils, and natural specimens preserved in alcohol, the most obscure one being a stillborn black baby. To satisfy his curiosity and to achieve his scholarly aims, Witsen had built an extensive network of friends and relations reaching into the world's most remote corners. Friends, in Witsen's terminology, were people whom he had once helped and who therefore felt under an obligation to him. Through his personal intercession, he enabled poor but industrious and talented young men to pursue studies that would otherwise have been beyond their means. In exchange for this he expected them later, as employees of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), to carry out investigations for him.[11]

Witsen was in a formidable position to assemble a wide range of ancient, natural and curious objects, for he was one of the seventeen 'gentlemen' that governed the VOC. Acting as a patron, he could instruct captains and skilled boatmen to gather information or goods for him. The vast, still extant correspondence between Witsen and

[10] Veenendaal 1950, p. xvi.
[11] Peters 1989, p. 112. See also Peters 2010, passim.

Cuper confirms that it was often Witsen who supplied new material, for example statuettes from Ceylon, after which Cuper would search his library and call on his network to gather information in order to process the material. For the purpose of the studies Witsen undertook together with Cuper, mainly directed at 'language, religion and time' in history or non-European contemporary cultures, it was particularly helpful to send questionnaires with ships sailing to distant destinations.[12]

The task of composing such a questionnaire was usually left to Cuper.[13] His first question on the list sent to Madagascar was 'whether there are any Jews, Muslims, or Christians' on the island, followed by questions about the languages of the people, circumcision, and other religious rites and ceremonies. How the Madagascan society and economy were structured was only referred to in the final questions.[14] Thus, their questions literally reflected the seventeenth-century scholarly preoccupation with the spread of peoples on earth, linguistics, and chronology.[15] The Madagascar example is only one of many that proves the great benefits of commerce—or commercial networks—for collecting knowledge. Cuper had no commercial power, and was therefore indebted to Witsen who could and would employ the network of the greatest and most powerful commercial company in the seventeenth century for the needs of the Republic of Letters.

Cuper did, however, have political power, and he was able to use that power to promote certain individuals to positions in the city bureaucracy, the clergy, and academia. The practice of book dedications clearly illustrates this mechanism, as scholars sought the protection of patrons, and thus an advancement of their career, by dedicating a book to them. Not every book dedication resulted in a new job, of course, but a dedication was usually rewarded with a valuable present or money, and made a scholar more noticeable to the patron, who could decide whether to further his client's cause in the future.[16] The number of books dedicated to Cuper has not been investigated yet,

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[12] Waals 1992, p. 141.

[13] Besides the one destined for Madagascar, discussed by Peters, one of the manuscript volumes in the *Collectio Cuperus* of the National Library, The Hague (NLH) also contains various other questionnaires and reports sent from abroad (shelfmark MS 72 C 14).

[14] Peters 1989, p. 133.

[15] Waals 1992, pp. 136–137.

[16] For an elaborate investigation of the numerous book dedications to Nicolaes Witsen, exemplary of the mechanism of scholarly patronage see Peters 1989, pp. 85–86 and 104.

and they were undoubtedly more than the two that are known so far: one by Johannes Gezelius (1615–1690), who posthumously published a commentary of Johannes Columbus on Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum* (1684), a project Cuper had actively supplied with material, and the other by Theodorus Janssonius van Almeloveen (1657–1712), a medical doctor with great interest in philology and antiquarianism, and who became professor of Greek, history and rhetoric, and some years later of medicine as well at the *Athenaeum Illustre* in Harderwijk.[17] He dedicated to Cuper his *Conjectanea*, part of *Opuscula sive antiquitatum e sacris, profanorum specimen* (1686), a compilation of comments on inscriptions and ancient objects, as well as philological questions. The dedication of this particular treatise to Gisbert Cuper seems logical because of the mainly archaeological matters discussed in it.[18] By means of this dedication, van Almeloveen could initiate a correspondence with Cuper and become one of the participants in his large scholarly network.

For many years they exchanged letters in which they collaborated on a chronological list of Roman consuls that would serve as a tool for dating inscriptions and through which van Almeloveen was assured access to the vast wealth of information from Cuper's library and those of his correspondents from whom Cuper frequently borrowed books for other scholars.[19] There is no trace of Cuper having actively supported van Almeloveen, for example, with a recommendation for his long sought-after academic job, so instead of van Almeloveen's patron, he may be more accurately described as his *maecenas*, someone who advanced the arts and sciences by helping others conduct their studies. Perhaps it would be best to describe him as an agent or intermediary between another scholar and the resources of his own network.

Notwithstanding the example of van Almeloveen in his capacity as burgomaster, and moreover as someone who had been a professor himself, Cuper was often involved in the selection process of candidates for academic positions. His correspondents sent him recommendations for their family and friends, and he was frequently asked to give his opinion on candidates or to recommend talented men for vacant jobs as well. The latter he did without being asked, as a letter

[17] Stegeman 2005, p. 41.
[18] Stegeman 2005, p. 55
[19] Stegeman 2005, pp. 70–71.

from Cuper to Paul Voet van Winssen in 1685 shows. Paul Voet was a mayor of the city of Utrecht and secretary to the States General. He also shared with Cuper a passion for learning. Cuper's letter of 28 June 1685 was a reply to a request from Voet to advise him on two candidates for the rectorate of Utrecht University. Cuper admitted that he had no knowledge of the first mentioned candidate, a certain Heidanus who was head of a school. Furthermore, he did not know under which 'professor litterarium', Heidanus had studied, but three or four years ago he had heard people in Deventer say that he did his job in Kampen satisfactorily, and that he could write a good Latin poem. The other candidate was one Pitiscus (probably Samuel), with whom Cuper was more familiar, due to letters he had received from him when he was still a professor. Pitiscus kept discipline in the classroom and was a laborious man, as his letters and a recent publication of 'Curtius' showed.[20]

Cuper had nothing more to say about these two candidates, but, after having thanked Voet for the honor of being asked to advise on such an important matter, he took the liberty of recommending other men: Johannes Verwey and Johannes Ortwinius. Ortwinius was a correspondent of Cuper, so we can consider this recommendation an act of agency, a service to a friend. The recommendation of Verwey is more curious, for Cuper was unacquainted with him, and had only read the preface of a Greek grammar written by him. This reading convinced him of the capacities of Verwey to 'rule a school' and to 'use his good talent for the education of youths'.[21] A recommendation without even knowing the person recommended, seems rather awkward, but—whether we believe him or not—Cuper urges Voet to believe and trust that

> I do not have any private interest in this matter, and give my humble considerations on these two men for no other reason than my curious and unspeakable diligence for the conservation of the *humaniora studia* and the schools and academies of our country, so that they may yield more men with as much learning and capacity as you have.[22]

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[20] NLH, MS 72 C 47, Cuper to Voet, 28 June 1685, ff. 16v–17v, 16v–17r.

[21] NLH, MS 72 C 47, ff. 17r–v: 'om syn goet talent te gebruyken tot het geleert maeken van de jeught'.

[22] NLH, MS 72 C 47, f. 17v: 'dat ick gants uyt geen particulier interesse in dese saack heb, ende dat nerghens om myne geringhe consideratien over dese twee persoonen laat gaan, als om dat met eenen sonderlinghen en onuytsprekelycken yver ben ingenoomen tot de conservatie van de humaniora studia, en vervolghens van

When in 1854 Cuper's collection of letters and papers was sold to the Dutch state, it was divided into a scholarly collection and a political one, the former, much larger collection to reside in the National Library, the latter in the National Archive in The Hague.[23] Notwithstanding the practical aim of this division, it disregards the double function some letters actually had. Thus, in the National Archive, most letters are indeed full of exchanges of political news, but that does not mean that Cuper did not gain antiquarian novelties from them as well. Likewise, while most letters in the National Library deal with antiquarian or more general scholarly matters, some also tell the latest news from foreign courts. Inevitably, certain correspondents figure in both the library and the archive.

This is true for Christiaan Constantijn Rumpf (1636–1706), Dutch resident in Stockholm from 1674 until 1706. From 1681 onwards (thus exactly from the start of Cuper's career in The Hague) Rumpf and Cuper regularly exchanged letters.[24] The start of the correspondence may have been a direct result of Cuper's rise in the political hierarchy of the Dutch Republic, but this is unsure. Rumpf consciously addressed Cuper as his patron, and even gave his youngest son, born in 1683, the name of his benefactor, Gisbert. Exactly what Cuper had done to deserve such an honor remains unclear, but later on, in 1684, it was due to his insistence that the States General granted Rumpf permission to return to the Dutch Republic for a short period, a permit Rumpf had been eagerly awaiting for more than ten years.[25] After 1698, there is, curiously enough, no correspondence left at all between Cuper and scholars and diplomats in Sweden. Why the correspondence between Rumpf and Cuper ended so suddenly is unknown, but it is clear that during nearly twenty years of exchange of letters, they

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de schoolen en academien onses vaderlants; op dat daer uyt meer luyden mooghen voorkoomen met soodanige geleertheit en bequaemheit onder andere begaeft, als die gheene is, aen dewelke de eere heb van te schrijven'.

[23] Next to the letters he received, Cuper kept copies of his outgoing letters. He had them bound into volumes comprising his correspondence with either one single person (when the correspondence was particularly voluminous or stretched over a long period of time), or different correspondents from the same region. In the case of Palmyra, he collected different letters on one subject in a separate volume.

[24] The first extant letter is not the first letter Cuper and Rumpf exchanged, so their correspondence may have started earlier. The letters between Rumpf and Cuper are preserved in NAH 1.10.24.16 and NLH, MS 72 C 10.

[25] Rietbergen 1990, pp. 322–323.

both contributed greatly to the diplomatic, scholarly and more general cultural relations between Sweden and the Dutch Republic.[26]

The majority of letters to and from Rumpf is kept in the National Archive, but this does not mean that their contents are strictly political. On the contrary, besides discussing political affairs, Rumpf acted as an intermediary between Swedish scholars and Cuper; he sent books and manuscripts to his patron and put him into contact with scholars in Sweden. Cuper likewise provided Rumpf with books and, for example, copies of the *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, the scholarly journal of Pierre Bayle.[27] Rumpf did not only read those books himself, he also distributed them to other interested men and women. He even read Cuper's letters aloud during meetings with his friends from the cultural elite of Stockholm, including Queen Ulrika Eleonora who was anxious to hear Rumpf spell out every word of Cuper's well-styled Latin epistles in which political news was usually mixed with remarks on the state of the Dutch learned community. Moreover, Cuper's occasional poems celebrating important events in Sweden were printed and distributed as soon as Rumpf got hold of them.[28]

The importance of the correspondence between Rumpf and Cuper lay in its benefit for the relations between the Dutch Republic and Sweden as political entities, but simultaneously in its capacity to provide a bridge between Scandinavia and the wider European Republic of Letters. This cannot be overestimated. On a political level, by pleasing the Swedish highest officials with his letters, Cuper managed to find 'valuable allies for the Dutch Republic he tried to serve' and, in the course of doing so, he also secured 'his own fame and the favor it might bring him'.[29] A flattering expression of the estimation with which Cuper was regarded in Sweden comes from Count Erik Lindschiold (1634–1690), who marveled at Cuper's capability of simultaneously 'producing erudite Latin letters and verses as well as being active in politics'.[30]

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[26] See on scholarly and cultural relations between Sweden and the Low Countries: Wrangel 1901, Losman 1980 and Noldus 2004.

[27] The letters exchanged between Cuper and Swedes, among whom Johannes Bilberg (1646–1717), Johannes Columbus (1640–1684), Johannes Gezelius (1615–1690), Lars Norrman (1651–1703), Elias Obrecht (1653–1698) and Johan Gabriel Sparwenfeldt (1655–1727), are kept in NLH, MS 72 C 10.

[28] Rietbergen 1990, pp. 323–326.

[29] Rietbergen 1990, p. 325.

[30] Rietbergen 1990, p. 334.

The contributions of Rumpf's and Cuper's cultural or intellectual exchange extended further. Cuper's Swedish correspondents, for example, continuously complained about the lack of an intellectual incentive and infrastructure in their region. As Cuper negotiated his Swedish correspondent's books to be issued by Dutch publishers, he could overcome the near absence of publishers in Sweden and establish profound cultural ties between the two countries.[31] Not only did the Swedes profit from the exchange, but Cuper was rewarded with most of the books that appeared in Sweden, and even some precious manuscripts, for example those of Johannes Meursius (1579–1639), that he delivered to Graevius who undertook to publish them.[32] He also provided the aforementioned Pierre Bayle and Henri Basnage de Beauval (the editor of *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans*) with books and news from Sweden to be included in their journals. Cuper thus opened a window to the North, and that was a valuable act, according to Basnage:

> nous avons si peu de commerce avec les Savans du Nord, que leurs livres nous sont encore nouveaux meme après quelques années. Nous profiterons donc sans scrupule de quelques-uns de cette nature qui nous sont tombez entre les mains par les soins obligeans de Mr. (Deputé aux Etats Generaux) Cuper, que l'importance et la distraction de ses emplois n'empêchent point d'étendre par tout sa curiosité pour les bons livres, et d'illustrer la Republique des Lettres par ses écrits.[33]

The numerous books Cuper sent to his Swedish friends through Rumpf cannot be discussed here. It is important to note, however, that besides the actual books, he also forwarded the latest news about the output of not only the Dutch presses, but the Italian ones as well, as news from the Italian front was regularly communicated to him by Antonio Magliabechi (1633–1714), librarian of the Grand Duke of Florence. Thus, by means of Rumpf, Cuper was literally the intermediary between the North and South of the European Republic of Letters,[34]

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[31] Rietbergen 1990, pp. 326–330.

[32] Rietbergen asserts that Cuper himself wanted to publish Meursius' work, but Rumpf clearly stated that he sent the manuscripts to Cuper for Graevius (Rumpf to Cuper 29 May 1686, NAH 1.10.24.16, ff. 196–198, f. 198). Indeed, in 1687, Graevius published (some of) the works of Meursius.

[33] Quoted in Rietbergen 1990, p. 342.

[34] Rietbergen 1990, p. 340.

yet he was also a middleman between East and West, a true spider in the early modern European web of communication.

Cuper's correspondence with representatives of the Dutch Republic in the Near East clearly shows the intricacies of relations of patronage and agency, and of politics and antiquarianism within one and the same network. As we have seen above, Cuper was an interesting patron for diplomats, because his position in the States General enabled him to protect his clients against slander by speaking well of them, and to help them in case of emergency by pleading their case in the States General. The latter he did for Jacob Colyer (1657–1725), Dutch Ambassador in Constantinople from 1686 until 1725. In 1700, a large part of the Consul's house tragically burnt down. Colyer wrote to Cuper that

> The damage is so great, that I cannot put it to words, and it can only be overcome when the representatives in the States General, with their famous charity and mildness will be willing to lighten our burden, or come to our help. You, Sir, if you want to, with your great reputation and power, can do a lot, even if you are not in The Hague, by writing favorable letters and recommendations to your friends, and I have no doubts about a good result. Meanwhile I ask you, Sir, to forgive me taking such liberty, for the proof you gave me from time to time of your protection and care, have caused me to do so.[35]

Colyer's plea for help was not in vain. In January 1701 he thanked Cuper for the extreme kindness he had bestowed upon him by recommending his case to the deputies in The Hague.[36]

The early correspondence, starting in 1688, between Cuper and Daniel Jan de Hochepied (1657–1723), Colyer's brother-in-law who was the Dutch Consul in Smyrna, very clearly confirms their

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[35] NAH 1.10.24.12, Colyer to Cuper, 24 September 1700, pp. 37–40 and 39: 'De geleden schade is ook soo groot, dat mijn pen niet bequaem is deselve te connen uijtdrucken, ende niet te versetten is, ten ware haer Ho: Mo: met hare beroemde goedertier- en mildadigheijt ons eenieger maten belieften te verlichten, of te hulp te comen, waertoe UWHo: EdGestr. des believende door sijn groot Credit en gesagh, alschoon hij sig niet in den Haag mogte bevinden, met favorable voorschrijvens en recommandatie aen sijn vrinden, veel doen can, als wanneer aen het gewenste succes niet dubiteer, middelerwijlen versoeck, dat UWHo: EdGestr. mij de vrijheijt, dien ik neem, belieft te pardonneeren, alsoo de preuves die sij mij van tijt tot tijt van hare protectie en genegentheijt heeft believen te geven, daervan de oorsaeck sijn'.

[36] NAH 1.10.24.12, Colyer to Cuper, 24 January 1701, pp. 41–44, 41.

patron-client (or agent) relationship. The large volume of extant letters (consisting of nearly 1,200 pages) contains several extracts from missives sent by de Hochepied to the States General[37] or to his clerk,[38] a copy of an official letter sent by de Hochepied and William Raye, the English Consul in Smyrna to Antonio Zeno, the *generalissimo* of the Republic of Venice,[39] a protest sent by de Hochepied to Raye,[40] and letters to other people (politicians) in the Dutch Republic. These papers show how many of his daily duties de Hochepied communicated to Cuper, almost as though he was reporting to his employer, which, in a way, Cuper, as a member of the States General, certainly was.

A very interesting plea for Cuper's protection was sparked by a conflict between de Hochepied and the Governor of Smyrna and a simultaneous problem with the Sephardim Jewish merchants in the city. The dispute caused de Hochepied to travel to Adrianople to plead his case before a higher judicial court.[41] After he returned to Smyrna, de Hochepied informed Cuper of the matter, but only very briefly, because he asserted that Cuper would have undoubtedly read the full and long-winded report that had been sent to the States General. He nevertheless summarized the outcome: that nothing had been undertaken against the Portuguese Jews, but that the governor had had to resign from his office. More important for his relation with Cuper was the fact that while in the vicinity of Constantinople, de Hochepied had met with Colyer, who at that time was engaged in peace negotiations at the Turkish court.[42] Before stating the real purpose of his letter—asking Cuper for his support—de Hochepied advised him that during their get-togethers in Adrianople he and Colyer had frequently raised a glass to Cuper's good health.[43]

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[37] NAH 1.10.24.13, 12 March 1695, ff. 135–140.
[38] NAH 1.10.24.13, 1 February 1695, ff. 131–133.
[39] NAH 1.10.24.13, 21 September 1694, ff. 129–130.
[40] NAH 1.10.24.13, 26 May 1695, ff. 159–161.
[41] De Hochepied's wife, Clara C. Colyer de Hochepied once wrote to Cuper to explain her husband's silence after he had suddenly left for business in Adrianopolis. Although she thought it did not suit a woman to write *nouvelles*, she could not resist the temptation to tell Cuper, 'who, as she knew from experience, greatly patronized her family and their interests', the latest news about the movements of the Turkish fleet against the Venetians. NAH 1.10.24.13, Clara Colyer to Cuper, 13 July 1695, ff. 155–158.
[42] Mowat 1928, p. 204, praises Colyer's conduct of the negotiations in Constantinople and the following results.
[43] NAH 1.10.24.13, de Hochepied to Cuper, 9 November 1695, ff. 175–179, 175.

After this flattering remark, de Hochepied got to the point: over their drinks, the brothers-in-law had discussed the peculiar negotiations in which Colyer was involved. De Hochepied relates that he was already ambitious about becoming a mediator of peace at the Turkish court, and that he was fortunate that Colyer had given him the chance to unofficially assist him with his duties. Colyer was very pleased with de Hochepied and wished him to be his official state-employed assistant. Colyer had already written to Witsen about this matter, asking him to support the promotion of de Hochepied. De Hochepied, in turn, provided Cuper with a copy of that letter,[44] while asking him to take up the matter with Witsen and, preferably, with the State Councillor Heinsius as well 'and to be so kind to use your great credit with the highest government to settle these matters in my favor, for which I will be indebted to you my entire life'.[45] It is interesting to discern how these diplomats consciously ventured to obtain the support of as many powerful men as possible by orchestrating them to work together for their clients' cause.

With his next letter, de Hochepied sent Cuper a present of two books written by the Greek patriarch in Jerusalem, who had given him the books when they had met in Constantinople. De Hochepied thought that Cuper would be pleased with those two anti-Papist tracts, and hoped that he would later on be informed about their contents and quality.[46] Whereas such presents were an excellent means to predispose a patron to the needs of his client, it seems that the main reward Cuper obtained from the Near East in return for his protection came in the form of news. Whereas men in diplomatic service were obliged to send letters to their government at home in order to inform about war movements, political matters, and intrigues going on at foreign courts, the letters sent to Cuper by Colyer and de Hochepied show that they provided the same service to individuals. This may have been

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[44] NAH 1.10.24.13, Copy of a letter from Colyer to Nicolaes Witsen, 6 September 1695, ff. 181–182. With this letter, Colyer asked Witsen to advance the case of his brother-in-law (de Hochepied) by making him his official assistant at the peace negotiations at the Turkish court, and to grant de Hochepied the right to install a vice-consul to perform the consular duties when he was away from Smyrna, as he would frequently be in his new office.

[45] NAH 1.10.24.13, de Hochepied to Cuper, 9 November 1695, ff. 175–179, 175: '(…) ende de goedheyt hebbe van het eenen ent andre met syn groot credit by de hooge regeringe in myn faveur te helpen appuyeren om daar voor myn leven lang verpligt te blyven'.

[46] NAH 1.10.24.13, de Hochepied to Cuper, 30 December 1695, ff. 183–184.

the most important process in the patron-client relationship, because Cuper—himself trying to establish and keep his name in The Hague—could benefit from the first-hand *nouvelles* provided to him.

What kind of *nouvelles* did his Near Eastern correspondents communicate to Cuper? Most notably political and military news with sometimes very detailed accounts of movements of troops, negotiations between different countries or parties, and the retirement or new appointment of members of staff of the diplomatic corps. Besides that, more general comments on the present state of affairs appear in the letters, such as news about religious festivals, epidemic diseases, and court gossip. As the friendship between Cuper and his correspondents grew with the number of letters they wrote, they exchanged more and more details about personal and family life as well. Surprisingly, in his letters, Cuper also painstakingly provided the latest news from Europe to his 'humble servants', signing his letters just as they did, with 'your humble servant, Gisbert Cuper'.

The reciprocity of news provision within Cuper's correspondence with the Near East, but also in the letters exchanged with Rumpf, is puzzling, because it implies a more equal basis for correspondence than patronage would seem to indicate. Cuper conscientiously ventured to tell Colyer and de Hochepied only the very latest news, and he sometimes chose not to include certain facts because he was sure that they had already heard them and he did not want to tell old news.[47] The reciprocity of exchange went even further, for Cuper also sent books to his friends in the East.[48] This is where it seems that the relations Cuper had with his 'clients' or 'agents' were based on reciprocal interest, rather than, or in addition to, hierarchical relations. The continuity of the exchange of newsletters between Cuper and Colyer and de Hochepied after 1694 seems to indicate a less asymmetrical relationship than expected between a patron and a client.

There can be several explanations for this. First, both sides had something to offer. Cuper was still very well informed about international politics and still wanted to know what was happening abroad, something quite imaginable in a time when newspapers were likewise

[47] For example NAH 1.10.24.12, Cuper to Colyer, 29 October 1704, ff. 119–124, 119: 'waar van ick nu sal swijghen, om dat versekert ben, dat de selve nu van alles sal verwittight zijn, ende ick uwe Exc. met gheen oudt nieuws magh op-houden'.

[48] NAH 1.10.24.13, Cuper to de Hochepied, 24 April 1705, ff. 9–16.

dependent on letters, thus always lagging behind. He expressed his great curiosity regarding the latest news in a letter to de Hochepied: 'I will thank you again for the news in those [last four letters], and testify that such writings are always very pleasant to me, because nothing seems more joyous to me, than to know what goes on in the world'.[49]

Second, it may have been that after Cuper left The Hague, he felt that he had to put more effort into correspondence that had once begun as expressions of gratitude from his former diplomatic clients abroad. It appears that during the first years of their correspondence, Cuper did not keep copies of his letters to Colyer and de Hochepied; he simply noted on their letters when he had answered them. Later on, he started to keep copies of his own responses as well, which may indicate that he had come to regard their correspondence as a mutual, more or less equal exchange of information, as he did with most of his scholarly correspondents. In the case of de Hochepied, another contributing factor may have been his rise to the rank of baron, which must have impressed Cuper, who had no noble blood.[50] Whereas political patronage was not absent in the later letters—as an extraordinary member of the States General Cuper could not influence decision-making directly, but still recommend people, or urge their cause to his friends who were ordinary members of the highest governing body—it cannot still have been the most direct incentive for the exchange of letters anymore. Therefore we must direct our attention to his antiquarian interest.

Diplomats in the Levant and the Near East were of particular value to Cuper, because they literally inhabited the cradle of civilization in which he took so much interest. The letters from Colyer and de Hochepied occasionally are accompanied by ancient coins or copies of inscriptions. From the first extant letter from de Hochepied to Cuper sent from Venice on 5 March 1688, it seems that the newly installed Consul of Smyrna, who was probably on his way to his new residence, knew exactly that Cuper wanted antiquities and old

[49] NAH 1.10.24.13, Cuper to de Hochepied, 24 April 1705, f. 14: 'soo sal ick U. W. G. nogh eens bedancken voor het nieuws, in deselve vervat, en betuyghen dat mij soo-daenigh schrijven altoos seer aengenaem sal zijn, door dien mij niet vermakelijker voorkomt, als te weeten wat in de werelt passeert'.

[50] NAH 1.10.24.13, Cuper to de Hochepied, 24 April 1705, f. 13: Cuper congratulates de Hochepied on the fact that the States General has decided to permit him to use the title of Baron, after the Emperor had granted him this noble status.

manuscripts in return for his protection.[51] Moreover, many diplomats, and also church ministers abroad,[52] were themselves very interested in the antiquity of the region where they were stationed,[53] so they knew what they were looking for. Usually they would also be acquainted with other diplomats and travelers in search of knowledge of the past, and they would at times, by letter, 'introduce' Cuper to new and, from a scholarly point of view, valuable correspondents.[54]

At times a correspondence was continued by a third party, as when Johannes Georgius Transfeldt, a Prussian traveler, obtained the letters of the deceased Coenraad Calckberner and decided to try to get in touch with Cuper himself, and to continue the supply of antiquities from Aleppo. He literally answered Cuper's letters to Calckberner that had arrived after Calckberner's death and added more information, some new inscriptions, and his own conjectures about the interpretation of several coins.[55] He also sent him coins[56] and a manuscript of his work on Athenian antiquities and the contemporary state of Athens.[57] Their correspondence ends with a letter from Cuper, who wonders why he has not heard anything from Transfeldt for almost two years.[58] He repeated his complaint about Transfeldt's silence to de Hochepied, and asked him whether he knew anything about the whereabouts of

[51] NAH 1.10.24.13, de Hochepied to Cuper, 5 March 1688, f. 73. De Hochepied apologizes to Cuper for not having paid his due respect in person, because he'd suddenly had to leave from Amsterdam earlier than expected. He hopes that Cuper will accept his most humble gratitude for everything he did (but he does not mention what exactly) and promises to be at his service for the rest of his life. He therefore eagerly awaited Cuper's first missive, in which he should ask for anything that pleased him, 'whether it be antiquities or manuscripts'.

[52] See Huussen/Wes-Patoir 1999, for Cuper's contact with the Dutch minister Johannes Heyman (1667–1737), who later, through Cuper's mediation, became professor of Oriental languages at Leiden University.

[53] It is important to realize that everyone who had enjoyed education in early modern Europe was fully aware of classical antiquity, and that it was a common hobby to collect coins and other curiosities from abroad.

[54] As van Heekeren put him into contact with Daniel Cosson, see NLH, MS 72 D 1, f. 55r-v.

[55] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Transfeldt to Cuper, 8 January 1695, ff. 1r–2r; Ibidem, Transfeldt to Cuper, 25 February 1695, ff. 4r–6v.

[56] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Cuper to Transfeldt, 4 September 1697, ff. 23r–27v: Cuper mentions that he received 27 elegant and rare coins from Transfeldt, and goes on to explain them.

[57] NLH, MS 72 D 1, 'Discursus Philosopho-Ponici', ff. 31r–49v.

[58] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Cuper to Transfeldt, 24 July 1699, ff. 28r–29v.

this man, whom he did not know, but who had sent him very nice and rare inscriptions.[59]

Cuper could not refer to the inscriptions he had received from Transfeldt without mentioning the precious inscriptions from Palmyra that were sent to him by Calckberner in 1694, to which we will return later. First it is interesting to look at another 'inheritor' of Cuper's letters to Calckberner, Giovanni Gosche, the next consul in Aleppo. His first letter to Cuper is a reaction to two letters by the Deventer burgomaster in which he apparently encouraged Gosche to obtain rare coins for him. The consul complained that ancient coins were particularly scarce around Aleppo, but admitted this was not his greatest concern. The problem was that he could not even promise Cuper to send him the first coins available, for he was bound to an earlier promise to deliver coins 'and other antiquities of that kind' to Nicolaes Witsen. The least he could do—which he did—was to promise that after he had supplied Witsen, he would start collecting for Cuper.[60]

This news may have been slightly disappointing to Cuper, although it could have been worse, because with Witsen he would have every chance to visit, admire and study the coins, or even borrow them, but Gosche did not disappoint him. Already, before this first extant letter, Gosche had a Dr. Pikerus deliver to Cuper three coins from the period of the Roman Emperors with the name Gordianus. He was very pleased to understand from Cuper's letters that 'these were not the most ordinary', and considering how little they had cost him, he thought he had hardly earned the honor of Cuper mentioning him in the second edition of his *Historia Trium Gordianorum*, a book about the three emperors. He would consider it as a gesture of Cuper's noble mind and would be encouraged to search even harder for 'something rare'.[61] Until that time, however, he hoped to entertain Cuper with a few inscriptions, the descriptions of their location and his conjectures on their meaning.[62]

Surprisingly, in 1702, Gosche refers to Cuper's first missive to Calckberner, which was now—after it had been in the hands of Transfeldt for a while—in the possession of Gosche. It dated from

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[59] NAH 1.10.24.13, Cuper to de Hochepied, 7 February 1700, ff. 255–256.
[60] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Gosche to Cuper, 27 February 1702, ff. 58r–60v.
[61] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Gosche to Cuper, 27 February 1702, f. 58v.
[62] Gosche had transcribed the inscriptions on separate pages: NLH, MS 72 D 1, ff. 62r–63v.

1688 and was a list of questions and requests about ancient and contemporary Aleppo. In it Cuper expressed his conviction that Aleppo and its surroundings would harbor many ancient inscriptions and he urged the consul to find them, transcribe them and send them to him. He stressed that he would cover the costs of the employment of third parties to do so.[63] Gosche, however, wrote that Cuper's hopes were in vain with regard to the city; he had only found one inscription, unfortunately illegible because it had been located in a high and dark hallway.[64] The surroundings of the city proved more fertile, as he managed to attach four pages of transcriptions. Gosche furthermore attempted to answer two of Cuper's questions about the ancient name(s) and the exact location of the city of Aleppo, a very serious and much debated question among scholars of this period.

Gosche clearly put a lot of effort and care into his letter, but not for charitable reasons. The conclusion of the letter sounds familiar:

> Before I end [this letter], I want to bring to the fore that I cannot live without a yearly emolument. Therefore I have addressed a petition to the States General, and my humble request to you, as you see the justification of my appeal, is that you support it and, by means of the great power you have, forcefully cause that I will have a good and quick response. And as long as I live I will be highly obliged to you.[65]

Cuper responded favorably to this appeal and assured Gosche that he would try to speak up for him and recommend his cause to his good friends in government. He did warn him not to expect too much, for he was an extraordinary member of the States General, and only ordinary members could decide on matters like this. He would furthermore speak about it to Witsen in Amsterdam, because the province of Holland took most interest in diplomatic affairs. Cuper was pleased to be of assistance, especially in such a delicate matter that had

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[63] NLH, MS 72 C 3, Cuper to Calckberner, 31 March 1688, ff. 33r–35v, 35v.

[64] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Gosche to Cuper, 27 February 1702, f. 59v.

[65] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Gosche to Cuper, 27 February 1702, ff. 60r–v: 'Eer ik afbreke, zal ik Uw Wel Ed: Groot-Agtb: aandienen, dat ik (…) sonder een jaarlijks tractement niet kunnen bestaan, my dieswegen met een smeekschrift aan Hare Hoog-Mogende hebbe geaddresseert, (…) is myn ootmoedig versoek, dat Uw Wel Ed: Groot-Agtb: ziende hoe regtmatigh myn eysch is, denselven gelieve te begunstigen en door het groot vermogen, dat deselve heeft, kragtiglyk te bewerken, dat ik daarvan een goed en spoedigen uytslag zie. En ik zal, soo lang ik leeve, Uw Wel Ed: Groot-Agtb: (…) op 't uyterste verbonden zyn'.

already been discussed without a good result (at the time of Consul Calckberner).[66]

Notwithstanding the urgency of Gosche's request, Cuper's letter started with enthusiastic praise for both the content of Gosche's letter and the appendix of inscriptions, which were without exception still unpublished. The inscription containing different names of Jupiter intrigued Cuper in particular, and he had written about it to experts in the field of Syrian and other Eastern languages in Rome. Here, Cuper took on the role of intermediary or agent of knowledge and information in the Republic of Letters, a role that will be elaborated on below. The value of the inscriptions was a good excuse for Gosche's inability to provide the coins in a timely manner. Cuper understood the difficulty in obtaining coins, because 'the [learned] amateurs of France and England, and many other countries, bought everything' and he even encouraged Gosche to supply Witsen as satisfactorily as possible, for he was his good friend and a great 'amateur' as well.[67] Cuper would be very pleased to be the second one Gosche would think of when buying coins. For Cuper it did not matter who obtained antiquities, as long as it was a serious and co-operative scholar. His main concern was whether remaining antiquities would be found at all, and transferred (whether originals or a copies) to Europe, where they could become the object of study and contribute to the advance of learning.

Returning to the painting of the ruins of Palmyra, we will see that Cuper especially mastered the art of agency when it came to antiquarianism. As he had done with Colyer and de Hochepied, in his missive of 1688 Cuper urged Coenraad Calckberner to send him copies of all the inscriptions that were found in the region of Aleppo, to buy ancient coins for him and to deliver pictures of ancient statues and reliefs. Calckberner initially began by answering some general questions about the inhabitants and the rulers of the region and the ancient names of the city of Aleppo.[68] A long silence followed this initial answer until, in 1694, Calckberner reported to Cuper that he was about to send him invaluable things: some rare ancient coins, the

[66] NLH, MS 72 D 1, Cuper to Gosche, 9 August 1702, ff. 64r-67v, 66v.

[67] 'Amateur' had a different meaning than today. Stemming from the Latin 'amare', 'to love' it refers to a person who is passionate about something, but generally about the arts and sciences.

[68] NLH, MS 72 C 3, Calckberner to Cuper, 18 August 1688, ff. 36r-37r.

first painting of the ruins of Palmyra and a travel report written by a minister in the company of the first early modern Europeans that had visited the ancient Syrian city.[69]

In return, Cuper supplied Calckberner, who himself took interest in antiquity, with analyses and commentaries on the goods he had provided, notably on the coins, of which many were 'very rare and never published before'.[70] He would probably have done the same with his findings on the inscriptions from Palmyra, taken from the travel report that Calckberner provided to him, if the consul had not died shortly after. Cuper did, however, enthusiastically spread the inscriptions, which contained valuable new information about the Palmyrene's calculation of time, the genealogy of their rulers and the names of some of their gods, to other European scholars in his correspondence network. Moreover, he tried to get their results published. The basis for such a publication still resides in the *Collectio Cuperus* in the Dutch National Library in The Hague.[71] It is a volume containing the two manuscripts of the minister's travel account—the English original and the Dutch translation commissioned by Cuper—plus all the letters Cuper received from other scholars after he had sent them the inscriptions.[72] His efforts at spreading new information and collectively investigating it will be discussed below.

After receiving the travel report with the inscriptions, he instantly wrote to his good friend and fellow scholar in Utrecht, Johannes Georgius Graevius, to enthusiastically tell him about the contents of his new discovery. He acknowledged that he could not read the report, for it was written in English, but until he had it translated, he would definitely entertain himself with the Greek inscriptions. He copied some for Graevius, 'that are of certain value and contain names unheard of by Roman and by our ears, and that are belonging to rituals of which I am unsure whether we have ever found them elsewhere'.[73]

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[69] NLH, MS 72 C 3, Calckberner to Cuper, July 1694, ff. 49r-50r.

[70] NLH, MS 72 C 3, Cuper to Calckberner, 4 September 1694, ff. 40r-48v: 'numismata nonnulla equidem rariora sunt et inedita' (f. 40r).

[71] NLH, MS 72 C 3.

[72] These were all French scholars to whom Cuper sent his letters via the Huguenot refugee in Rotterdam Henri Basnage de Beauval (1656–1710): Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721), Antoine Pougel, Eusèbe Renaudot (1646–1720), Nicholas Toinard (1629–1706) and Claude Nicaise (1623–1701).

[73] Bodleian Library, Oxford (Bodl.), MS D'Orville 478, Cuper to Graevius, 16 January 1694, f. 84r: 'quae sunt quanti vis pretii, et Complectuntur nomina Romanis &

In May, Cuper obtained a Dutch translation of the English manuscript. He sent it to Graevius, asking him whether he could highlight which passages were interesting enough to be published in Latin or French. Graevius was immediately convinced of the need to publish the travel account and agreed with the Utrecht printer Francois Halma on publishing a Latin translation.[74] The grave problem now was to find a translator, a problem that persisted for over two years. In the meantime, another copy of the manuscript was published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, the journal of the Royal Society in London.[75] This copy of the travel report had been sent directly by the author, William Halifax, to Edward Bernard (1638–1697), an Orientalist and astronomer in Oxford, who in turn had forwarded it to Thomas Smith (1638–1710), who in 1695 published it in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Furthermore, an account of the history of Palmyra, partly based upon the travel account, was published—also in English—by Abednego Seller (ca. 1646–1720).[76]

The English publications had only a very limited reach, for most continental European scholars did not master the language. Finally, in 1697, a Latin review of the travel account appeared in the journal *Bibliotheca Librorum Novorum* by Neocorus, a pseudonym of Ludolphus Kuster (1670–1716).[77] From that moment on, a larger European audience was able to enjoy the discovery of Palmyra. Cuper wrote to Graevius that he was pleased with the review, that it was a good summary of the most important discoveries, but that he hoped he himself could publish it once again, supplemented with the findings and remarks he had received from diverse scholars, most notably his friends among the French clergy.[78] Notwithstanding his satisfaction with Kuster's summary, Cuper must have been slightly disappointed that Kuster had not contacted him, for it was well known that Cuper had collected more, valuable material in addition to the travel report itself. For example, Cuper's efforts were mentioned in the letter from Bernard to Smith that was published alongside the extract from the travel account in the *Philosophical Transactions*. In it, Bernard urged

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nostris auribus inaudita, ad hos ritus, qui nescio an alibi obvii sint'. The inscriptions are inserted on a loose sheet of paper: Bodl., MS D'Orville 478, ff. 116r–117r.

[74] NLH, MS, 72 C 2, Graevius to Cuper, 31 May 1694, ff. 214r–v.

[75] *Relation* 1695.

[76] Seller 1686.

[77] Koster 1697.

[78] Bodl., MS D'Orville 478, Cuper to Graevius, 29 October 1697, f. 138r.

Smith to publish the extract in the journal of the Royal Society, as a 'not unpleasant appetizer, until the well-known and very learned man Cuper shall publish additional material on the city of Salomon and its ruins'.[79] Moreover, in one of the three copies of Seller's book held by the Bodleian Library in Oxford, a small fragment from a journal is pasted, mentioning that Cuper was the recipient of the manuscript of the journey to Palmyra.[80]

Finally, in 1698, a Dutch version of the travel account was published by Cornelis de Bruyn (1652–1726/27), a traveler who had been in Syria but had not visited Palmyra himself due to the grave dangers that awaited travelers on their way through the Syrian Desert to the ruins. It is interesting to note that de Bruyn, an artist, produced an engraving of the ruins of Palmyra in his publication which was taken from the one in the *Philosophical Transactions*, but to which he had added some improvements, as seen on a painting that had come from Aleppo to Amsterdam.[81] This, undoubtedly, was Cuper's painting. Apparently, Cuper had given de Bruyn permission to study his painting. Moreover, it seems that Cuper was in the possession of the 'master copy' of the painting of the ruins of Palmyra: the incomplete drawing that Halifax sent to Bernard was probably even taken from it. Cuper's contact with Calkberner, invaluable for the advancement of his studies, was part of a larger European effort to understand the antiquarian past, and its importance should not be underestimated. From the comfort of his study in provincial Deventer, Cuper played a valuable role as an intermediary between East and West.

From the many examples above we can provide a typology of the different roles Cuper performed within his wide-ranging network of correspondence. Subsequent to becoming deputy to the States General in 1681, his rise in politics allowed him to engage in epistolary exchanges with diplomats in every corner of Europe and beyond, whereas prior to his new role his correspondence had mainly been with other scholars. It also gave him the means to act as a patron for both diplomats

[79] *Relation* 1695, Edward Bernard to Thomas Smith, 7 October 1695, pp. 83–84: 'donec vir illustris & adprime doctus D. Cuperus uberiora forte ediderit de urbe Solomonis ejusque reliquiis'.

[80] Fragment pasted on the back of the cover of Seller's *The antiquities of Palmyra* (Bodl., Douce S 772).

[81] Bruyn 1711, p. 335.

(whose careers he could advance and who he could protect and help when they encountered misfortune) and scholars (to whom he could offer recommendations to academic positions). These two different modes of patronage were performed separately with different people and by separate letters, but within the same sphere of power relations in the Dutch Republic.

The third and fourth modes of agency were performed within different hierarchical spheres, those of the Dutch Republic and of the Republic of Letters, but simultaneously in most letters to diplomats such as Rumpf, Calckberner, Colyer, de Hochepied and Gosche. Cuper was a 'newsagent', communicating the latest events from the European political stage to and receiving such information from his correspondents in Stockholm, Aleppo, Smyrna and Constantinople. Although he stipulated himself that he was simply very interested in what happened in the world, his role as information broker may well have furthered foreign affairs of the Dutch Republic.

At the same time, the political news in his letters is mixed with scholarly information and numerous elaborations on his scholarly goals. Thus, his relations with the aforementioned diplomats also contributed to the coherence of the European Republic of Letters. Connecting North to South and East to West, Cuper acted as an 'agent of antiquity'. His political status may have been of less importance, as, in his role as antiquity agent, he earned respect from his contemporaries and established his name in the scholarly community. Regardless of Cuper's personal gains, these several modes of patronage and agency, which he performed with diligence and great enthusiasm until the end of his life, made him a true and humble servant of his two cherished Republics.

CHAPTER FIVE

MERCATOR SAPIENS: MERCHANTS AS CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Marika Keblusek

In 1632, the humanist scholar Caspar Barlaeus officially opened the newly established Amsterdam Atheneum with his inaugural lecture *Mercator sapiens* (The Wise Merchant).[1] Addressing an audience of mostly merchants and magistrates, Barlaeus chose to discuss the 'exceptionally fruitful exchange between commerce and the study of humanities and philosophy'.[2] Commerce, he claimed, could not and should not exist without culture. Therefore, Barlaeus promoted the collaboration of 'trade and philosophy', claiming that merchants would be happiest and most likely to be successful professionally if they immersed themselves in serious study. Tracing the connection between business and scholarship back to ancient times (rather than discussing biblical perspectives), he referred to Plato, who, in his writings about the perfect state, had stressed the importance of merchants—in Barlaeus' paraphrase, 'not only those who buy and sell material stuff, but also those who sell to others, for a reasonable price, culture, science and art'. The Greeks, so Barlaeus observed, had realized that ideas and art were distributed together with commercial wares, and transferred by merchants via established trade routes. The foundation of a university and library in Amsterdam, then, was particularly appropriate; 'Europe's storeroom' as he dubbed Amsterdam, would, from then on, also stock the products of philosophy, art and science.[3] Barlaeus explicitly

[1] This essay is based on a keynote lecture given at the 2006 SHARP-conference, and subsequent papers at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald and the European University, Florence in 2007. Some parts of this essay were published in Keblusek 2009.

[2] Barlaeus 1967; Blok 1976, pp. 15–18. His text is loosely based on Martianus Capella's *Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, see Cook 2007, pp. 68–73 and Secretan 2002.

[3] In his *Broederschap der schilderkunst* (1654), Thomas Asselijn similarly referred to Amsterdam as 'the Warehouse of Europe' ('het Pakhuis van Euroop'): Asselijn 1878, p. 16.

referred to the gathering and distribution of *intellectual* capital as a crucial characteristic of the *mercator sapiens*; a man who was not only well versed in matters of economy, but could as easily hold his own in discussions with scholars and humanists.[4] Obviously, Barlaeus was more concerned about what was in the merchant's head, rather than what stood on the shelves of his cabinet. Whether many members of his audience did indeed aspire to this intellectual ideal remains to be seen; nevertheless, several Amsterdam traders were instrumental in the distribution of, and trade in, *exotica, naturalia*, paintings, sculpture, coins, medals and books, and many of them were avid collectors themselves.

This mutual dependency of commerce and art was also celebrated a decade later, in 1653–1654, in a series of poems by Thomas Asselijn celebrating the founding of the so-called 'Brotherhood of Painters' during the annual festivities on St Luke's day. Asselijn's poems were dedicated to one of the most prominent Amsterdam merchant-collectors, Joan Huydecoper, Lord of Maarseveen.[5] Asselijn had Mercury admonish Mars and Hercules to 'protect art with the State': 'Here [*i.e.* in Amsterdam] is the Exchange, and the money, and the love of art'. In another poem, Mercury took Apollo and Pallas on a tour of Amsterdam highlights, which made the gods realize that the city's greatness was due to its local art scene. Indeed, the sheer number of artists and patrons rendered the city, indeed the whole nation, immortal.[6] Similarly, Arnoud Houbraken in his *De Groote Schouburch* (1718–1721) confirmed that

> in these days, art flourished in the Dutch Republic, especially in Amsterdam. The advancing peace would silence Bellona, enemy of the Arts (…). Now one could see the citizens create a new love of art; one became the other's patron, with Mr Joan van Maarseveen, Knight of

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[4] Taverne 1990, p. 6, connects Barlaeus's concept of the ideal *mercator sapiens* to the new social and intellectual status of the 'merchant-magistrate' (koopman-regent) in the Dutch Golden Age. Yet as we shall see below, merchant-scholars were altogether an older phenomenon. Taverne 1978, p. 445, n.92 suggests that the Athenaeum may have been established following the London examples of Gresham College and the Lectureship of Mathematical Sciences. Both institutions were supported by London merchants to provide academic foundations for commerce and trade.

[5] On Huydecoper, see below.

[6] Asselijn 1878, pp. 21 ('Hier is de beurs, en 'tgeld, en liefde tot de Kunst') and 17 ('Zoo kan men een Staat, een Ryk, door Kunst onsterflyk maaken (…) / Geen eeuw, geen ryck heeft ooit zo heerelyck geblonken,/Waar in de konsten zyn zoo rykelyk gevoedt,/ Noch van Begunstigers, in zulken overvloedt').

> St. Michael, surpassing them all. Art lovers and artists reached out their hands—and hearts.[7]

The longstanding, intense involvement of early modern Dutch merchants in the arts is also clear from another contemporary source, the *Schilder-boeck* (1604) of Karel van Mander, van Houbraken's predecessor. A social analysis of the 76 individuals named as 'art-lovers' (*liefhebbers*) and owners of paintings by van Mander shows that one-third of them were merchants, the majority of whom resided in Amsterdam, Haarlem and Leiden.[8] Some of them not only bought works of art, but also ventured out as dealers. Obviously, they had the capital to invest in expensive works of art, and could thus extend their trade to attract wealthy clients.[9] In 1618, the Amsterdam merchant Hans le Thoor, primarily active in the jewel trade, offered paintings from his own stock to the artist Pieter Isaacsz, who represented the Danish king as an agent both in political and cultural affairs.[10] One Jan Antonio Romiti, an Amsterdam merchant with an Italian background, bought over forty paintings from the artist Hercules Seghers in 1630 to sell on to other collectors. Some scholars have suggested that the frequently used term *liefhebbers* implies a non-professional commercial interest in arts and collectables, trading on the side in the objects one collected.[11]

Of course, mercantile immersion in art and culture was not exclusively a Dutch seventeenth-century affair. A Fugger factor (*i.e.* business representative) in Madrid, the German merchant Anton Meyting handled commercial transactions, sent trade news and political information and concerned himself with the purchase and transport of luxury goods and collectable items.[12] In England, merchants authored and collected books, participated in antiquarian discourses, wrote poetry,

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[7] Houbraken 1718–1721: 'In dezen tyd bloeide de Konst in Nederland, inzonderheid te Amsterdam. De Vrede stond voor de deur, die Bellona vyandin der konsten aan band zouw leggen (…). Thans zag men de Stedelingen een nieuwe konstlust scheppen, en de een toonde zig voor den ander een Mecenas, daar de Heer Joan van Maarseveen, Ridder van St. Michiel, elk in voorging. Konstlievenden en Konstenaren reikten nu elkander hart en hand'.

[8] Bok 1993.

[9] Montias 2002, p. 114.

[10] Montias, 2002, pp. 115 and 144–150 (the case of le Thoor). On Isaacsz see Noldus 2007.

[11] Veen 2005, pp. 124–126. But see also Goldgar 2007, pp. 59–61 and Ho 2009 for another appreciation of the term.

[12] Pérez de Tuleda/Gschwend 2001, p. 26; Strohmeyer 1997, p. 182.

patronized the theatre and built well-stocked cabinets of curiosities.[13] International traders made use of their contacts to purchase collectable items (antiquities, exotic specimens, animals and plants) which they then sold on to others. Henry Garraway's numerous business partners in Holland, France, Germany and Italy, for example, enabled him to ship statues from Rome to Livorno, and hence to London on behalf of Inigo Jones.[14]

Merchants should thus be taken into account as intermediaries in cultural affairs in the early modern period.[15] Their vital involvement as a *group* of middlemen in this process, however, has not been systematically studied. Only recently have scholars working in the field of the history of collecting, and historians focusing on the connection between commerce and science, shown a more systematic interest in the early modern merchant as agent in cultural affairs. They argue, in particular, that the contemporary craze for 'rarities' from exotic places could only develop because of expanding travel and trade of Europe with Africa, the Americas and Asia. With their vast networks of commercial representatives, financial middlemen and business correspondents established at crucial points along the trade routes, merchants—especially those already dealing in luxury goods—were invaluable as distributors of artifacts and knowledge, serving princely collectors and often active as collectors themselves.[16]

Undoubtedly, by far the most striking—and the best known—example of a group of merchants active as cultural mediators was the Fugger dynasty.[17] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries its members imported a vast range of collectables destined for the cabinets and libraries of their princely patrons, and for their own collections as well: live animals such as monkeys and parrots, exotic plants and other precious *naturalia*, medals, perfumes, glass, metals, coins, musical instruments, manuscripts and books. Well-educated and widely traveled, the

[13] Examples in Grassby 1995, pp. 349–355.

[14] Howarth 1984, p. 11.

[15] See also Keene 2007, pp. 18–19: 'Collecting (…) soon became an attribute of the well-educated merchant (…). Increasingly, first in Italy and then in the Low Countries, civic communities, rather than the heirs of a collector, came to be seen as the appropriate custodians and promotors of such facilities for the public good. In Amsterdam between 1585 and 1730 ninety of these private collections have been identified'.

[16] Cook 2007; Gelder/Mijers 2009; Smith 2002.

[17] A vast literature on the Fuggers exists; recently see Häberlein 2006, Kellenbenz 1990.

Fuggers in particular fit well into the category of 'merchant-scholars'. Belonging to the minor nobility, and having built up a reputation as serious scholars, humanists and patrons of the arts, they aspired to be on a par with the princes and kings whose collections of art, artifacts and books they were instrumental in building up.[18]

Similarly, Philipp Hainhofer was a household name in the world of early modern collecting, *Wunderkammer* and libraries.[19] Based, like the Fugger company, in the southern German town of Augsburg, the merchant-scholar Hainhofer established a vast collection in the early seventeenth century, which doubled as a commercial stock room: its aristocratic visitors could purchase the objects, musical instruments, paintings or books they fancied. The reputation of this *Wunderkammer*—as well as that of its owner—is confirmed in a letter by Duke Wilhelm V of Bavaria, who informed his son Duke Maximilian I that Hainhofer 'is learned as well as being a merchant (…) in whose house I saw all kinds of foreign and strange things, as well as almost an entire *Kunstkammer*'.[20] Hainhofer's cabinet was regularly replenished by contributions from fellow-merchants with trading posts all over Europe—such as his local colleagues from the Fugger and Lumaga companies in Augsburg—while foreign merchants visiting the town also supplied him with artifacts. Among his patrons, Hainhofer could boast Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, to whom he sold a spectacular *Kunstschrank*—a marvelous piece of exhibition furniture and a work of art in itself.[21]

Like the Fuggers, Philipp Hainhofer had a reputation as a scholar, a humanist, a *mercator sapiens*, who understood the books and objects he collected and displayed in the symbolic art cabinets he commissioned. As a political correspondent, diplomatic representative and agent in cultural affairs, Hainhofer worked first for Duke Philipp II von Pommern-Stettin and, from 1613 onwards, for Philipp's brother-in-law, the great bibliophile Duke August of Wolfenbüttel. Apart from books, manuscripts and news, Hainhofer supplied August with a vast array of luxury goods: horses, clocks, mirrors, dogs, chess sets, paintings, furniture, mechanical toys and shells—and he also occasionally

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[18] Meadow 2002, p. 184.

[19] The best biography of Hainhofer in Lüdtke 1999, pp. 10–72. See also Boström 1995; Gobiet 1984; Roeck 1992.

[20] Quoted in Boström 1985/2001.

[21] Boström 2001. The *Kunstschrank* can still be seen in Uppsala.

contracted musicians and dance masters.[22] In his letters, he stresses again and again why the objects offered for sale should be purchased by his patron: for their monetary value, their aesthetic quality and, above all, their rarity and exclusivity. Having visited and described many European *Kunstkammern* himself, Hainhofer was able to compare princely collections and could thus point out that a new acquisition was not to be found elsewhere. Thus, the desired object would enhance the honor and immortality of the prince.[23]

The great variety in luxury goods and collectables traded by the Fuggers, Hainhofer and other merchants shows that specialization in certain objects was not necessarily the case. On the contrary, these men prided themselves in being able to supply their patrons with anything they might fancy; indeed, a crucial characteristic that qualified them as successful cultural agents was their versatility, which depended entirely on the range of the merchant's existing commercial networks.[24] This implied the merchant's control over a trustworthy information circuit, consisting of factors, representatives, branch members and business partners, all of whom were in written contact with him. Their letters often contain a mixture of commercial, political and social information with remarks on anything from prices, transport, military issues, news items, as well as observations of a more personal nature.[25] Thus, the merchant's 'house' became an information center, from where news was distributed to third parties, turning the merchant into a political correspondent, a position which often lead on to diplomatic assignments.[26]

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[22] Gobiet 1984, passim, for examples. In 1636, and again in 1638, Hainhofer attempted to sell a cabinet to King Charles I or another wealthy English collector, via Samuel Hartlib, a German merchant living in London: Sheffield University, Hartlib Papers 36/3/1A-B; 36/3/2A-B; 36/3/3A-7B; 36/3/11A-12B.

[23] For Hainhofer's marketing techniques: Roeck 1992, p. 26.

[24] Some existing business archives reveal the vast international communication networks constructed by these traders—for example the Datini archive in Prato, the Fugger archive in Augsburg, and the Van der Meulen archive in Leiden.

[25] Trivellato 2004, p. 4: 'the age of European travelling merchants had progressively faded, and letters become the primary tool through which webs of commercial realtions were woven across space and social group'.

[26] Calabi/Keene 2007b, p. 348. For a contemporary comparison of the merchant's house with an information center, see the writings of the Hartlib circle, in particular John Dury's *Considerations tending to the happy accomplishment of England's Reformation* (London 1647), in which libraries and intelligence officers are described as 'exchange-places', and likened to merchant's gathering places: Dury 1647, pp. 40–48.

Born in Antwerp, Daniël van der Meulen (1554–1600) had married into the wealthy Flemish merchant family de la Faille. After the Sack of Antwerp in 1585, he worked in Bremen for a while, and in 1591 moved to Leiden, from where he conducted business with partners in Germany, the Mediterranean, Turkey, the Levant, Africa and Brazil.[27] Van der Meulen established a news agency and assumed diplomatic responsibilities for the States General.[28] One of his correspondents in Frankfurt, the French agent Jacques Bongars, supplied van der Meulen with over 300 letters detailing political news from the southern and middle regions of Europe; also, he sent books to the Leiden printing houses using van der Meulen's existing business channels.[29] Van der Meulen himself was involved in the search for paintings for Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, assisting Count Simon zur Lippe, Rudolf's delegate in Emden. Count Lippe had contacted Daniël's brother Andries (who still worked in Bremen), who then turned to Daniël and some business associates in Antwerp, Amsterdam and Middelburg to scout the art works. Details of the search, purchase, financial matters and transport are documented in letters sent between the van der Meulen brothers.[30]

Existing commercial routes, then, formed a crucial chain in the distribution of books, works of art and collectables in Europe, and beyond; it is on this logistic level that the role of merchants in the process of cultural transfer can be seen most clearly. Significantly, in the late sixteenth-century, the Dukes of Bavaria chose the merchant firm of Ott in Venice to handle their demands for art and luxury products, often preferring their services to those of specialized art agents and connoisseurs. This was not because the Otts knew so much about the things they were buying and selling, but simply because they had the right contacts in Italy: as German merchants, they enjoyed a trade monopoly for the export of goods out of Venice. In other words, they literally controlled transport and payment for goods going over the Alps. Furthermore, David Ott was manager of the Fugger branch in Venice and organized book and manuscript transports destined for

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[27] Jongbloet-Van Houtte 1986; Roosbroeck 1970.

[28] However, he refused the post of ambassador in France in 1597: Jongbloet-Van Houtte 1986, p. lxiv. On his news agency and diplomatic assignments: pp. lxx–lxxi.

[29] Jongbloet-van Houtte 1986, p. lxiii; Lauwaert 1927.

[30] Roosbroeck 1970, cols. 36–43.

the libraries of Hans Jakob and Ulrich Fugger. At times, Ott furnished their book agents traveling to and from Venice with money.[31]

Similarly, the Elsevier and Blaeu firms did regular business with Ottavio Tensini, a prominent member of the Italian merchant community in Amsterdam, where his brother-in-law, a merchant by the name of Francesco Feroni, had gained a reputation as political and cultural agent to the Medici. Another example of a *mercator sapiens*, Tensini owned a considerable picture collection, which Cosimo de' Medici visited during his trip to Amsterdam in 1668, accompanied by Feroni and the bookseller Pieter Blaeu. What services Tensini was actually paid for by Blaeu and Elsevier is not specified in the Amsterdam Exchange Bank's ledgers, but it seems safe to assume he was logistically involved in book transports to Tuscany.[32]

A distinction should be made between *merchant-agents* active for other book and art dealers—in other words, merchants working for merchants—and *merchant-agents* acting on behalf of customer clients. Financial investments and risks were certainly taken by those merchants who acted as cultural agents for collectors, purchasing books and manuscripts, as well as other luxuries. They had to advance money for their purchases and—more often than not—had to wait years to be reimbursed. While they had to be highly creative in financial matters, their initiative in selection and purchase of products was not always appreciated by their patrons.

In Amsterdam, for example, the Swedish-born merchant Peter Trotzig quickly became known among the Stockholm elite as one of the most successful art and book agents between 1650 and 1670, supplying Queen Christina, Count Magnus de la Gardie and Count Carl Gustaf Wrangel with all kinds of luxury products: tapestries, furniture, antiquities, sculpture, glass, globes, maps, jewellery, and books. Furthermore, Trotzig was instrumental in contracting Dutch architects for building projects in Sweden, while one could also order construction materials, garden supplies and architectural designs from him. However well he knew the Amsterdam market for luxury goods, apparently he was not at liberty to decide himself what to acquire—his job was to buy what he was ordered to buy.[33]

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[31] Backmann 1997.
[32] On Feroni and Tensini: Cools 2006.
[33] Losman 1980, pp. 197–280; Noldus 2004, pp. 111–119.

The issue of initiative in the selection process of books and art is an intriguing one. Why was Trotzig not trusted to choose what he thought the count might find interesting? Did this have to do with his qualities as an agent—his taste, his expertise in bibliophile or artistic matters, or rather the lack of it—or with his patron Wrangel, who knew so precisely what he coveted that he needed no advice? In other words, should we think of art and book agents as personal shopping assistants, or as collection advisors? Were they shaping libraries and art galleries or rather just filling their patron's walls and shelves, or did this vary depending on each individual case?

Indeed, this may have differed according to the status of an agent. Someone like Philipp Hainhofer seems to have been particularly independent from his patrons in his selection of possible objects for their collections. In fact, potential customers could come to his house and pick out what they liked. Unlike Trotzig, Hainhofer's degree of initiative can be called extraordinary: he designed and built his elaborate art cabinets *before* they were commissioned, only offering them to a specific customer he had in mind when completed (this did not always result in a sale). Hainhofer's taste and knowledge were, it seems, indisputable—even a notoriously hard to satisfy patron such as Duke August let Hainhofer advise him in artistic matters, and seems to have gladly accepted books that Hainhofer sent him, even without being prompted to do so. This stands in sharp contrast with the ducal attitude towards his many other book agents, who were immediately told off when supplying August with a title he had not explicitly asked for. Their main task was to draw up 'catalogues' of recently published or available books (often done in collaboration with local booksellers and publishers) which they sent on to Wolfenbüttel for the duke to choose from. (Exactly what Peter Trotzig did for Wrangel.) Perhaps Hainhofer's humanist education—he seems to have been fluent in seven languages and had traveled widely—as well as his reputation as a collector, caused the duke to trust him and allow him relative freedom in the choice and acquisition of books and other goods.

But even Hainhofer experienced problems when it came to payments. In the summer of 1634, for example, he reported the successful purchase and shipment of new books in a letter to the duke; however, he hadn't yet commissioned the medal decorated with diamonds and pearls which August had ordered 'because I have no cash with which to pay the goldsmith'. He warned the duke that he would not be able to proceed with the order 'unless Your Highness will lend me a helpful

royal hand, for which I have so often prayed; may God soften your heart'.[34] Not only did Hainhofer, like other agents, have to advance the money needed for payment of books, manuscripts, jewelery and all other things he bought, but salary due to him for his work as a ducal agent was not paid out, either. Again, this seems to have been the rule rather than an exception. Payment for services rendered could, of course, take different forms, the most obvious and traditional one being rewards in terms of personal advantages and reciprocity of services. Perhaps this is why some merchants with successful secondary careers as agents were elevated to the (minor) nobility, rewarded with a title and the accompanying social status: Hainhofer himself, members of the Fugger dynasty, the Dutch trader Jacob Momma and Francesco Feroni, political and cultural agent to Cosimo II de' Medici.

As far as we know, Feroni's successor as Cosimo's Amsterdam agent never gained a noble title, although he provided similar services. Between 1673 and 1692, the Italian merchant Giovacchino Guasconi supplied the Medici prince with thousands of newsletters, yet his chief responsibility, according to this correspondence, was the acquisition of books and works of art. Also, Guasconi coordinated the transmission of letters and packages to Italy on behalf of the Amsterdam bookseller Daniel Elsevier, his advisor, librarian-diplomat Nicolaas Heinsius and the diplomat Abraham de Wicquefort, who, in the 1640s and 1650s, had been one of Duke August's main book agents. These activities illustrate how a merchant such as Guasconi operated on several levels within the agency system at the same time. Precisely *because* he was a merchant, Guasconi could rely on multiple networks: suppliers of goods and political information, correspondents, shippers and postmasters. A supplier and correspondent himself, he also facilitated the transfer of letters and parcels for others.[35] Thus, merchants as book and art agents relied on individual networks, which often overlapped, and their roles in any of these networks were diverse: an agent could assist one colleague by being his correspondent, yet assume a facilitating role for another. Merchants with international connections, and their use of networks on various levels, were thus pre-eminently suited for tasks in the cultural domain.

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[34] Gobiet 1984, pp. 606–607, nr. 1154, Hainhofer to Duke August, 25 July/4 August 1634; nr. 1156, Hainhofer to Duke August [Summer 1634].

[35] Veen/McGormick 1985, pp. 31–33. Guasconi's correspondence still awaits further research.

Most merchant-agents did not limit their interest to the collections of others. Being a connoisseur or bibliophile himself could elevate a merchant to the level of the patrons for whom he was acquiring. As a collector in his own right, he could more actively partake in the processes of cultural exchange and intellectual discourse, having become, in effect, a patron himself. Not unimportantly, the commercial value of a superb library or art gallery must have been well understood by members of the merchant community.

Recent studies on Amsterdam merchant-collectors have shown that they formed tightly knit networks held together by complex dynastic, commercial and cultural ties.[36] A key figure in the early seventeenth-century business world was the international banker Balthasar Coymans (1555–1634), one of the ten wealthiest men in Amsterdam, whose house and collections were praised by Joachim Sandrart.[37] In 1614, Balthasar's daughter Elisabeth married Johann Deutz, himself a successful merchant, and after Deutz' early death in 1638, took over the textile business with her eldest son Jean. Another daughter, Maria, married Joan Huydecoper in 1624, the future burgomaster of Amsterdam and extremely well-connected in local intellectual and artistic circles. Besides business interests, individual members of these families shared a passion for collecting, which was mutually fed and influenced.[38] Between 1646 and 1650, Jean Deutz and his brothers Jeronimus and Joseph undertook a *grand tour* of Italy. In subsequent years, they not only imported fine silks, tobacco, mirrors and silver from Rome, but also crates filled with works of art. Most likely, these shipments of paintings and sculpture were meant to be sold to collectors in Amsterdam.[39] While both Jean and Joseph assembled a good many paintings themselves, Italian art was not prevalent in their galleries even though both men owned a number of paintings by Dutch artists working in Rome. Both brothers (as well as other members of the Deutz' extended family) possessed a good number of paintings by

[36] Montias 2002, p. 60, stresses these various links. See for the mutual influence of networks on collecting practices: Goldgar 2007.

[37] Unfortunately, no inventory of Coymans' collection is known. Bikker 1998, pp. 290–291.

[38] Also, the Coymans family was related to yet another Amsterdam merchant dynasty through the marriages between Johannes Coymans to Sophia Trip (in 1624) and eldest son, Balthasar the Younger, to Maria Trip (in 1641). See Bikker 1998, pp. 290–291 on the collecting habits of the Coymans and Huydecoper families.

[39] For Deutz: Bikker 1998; Van Veen 1992, p. 104.

Michiel Sweerts whom they had met and befriended during their visit to Rome. They became the artist's most important patrons, and he in turn acted as their Roman agent for all kinds of artistic and non-artistic assignments.

Through their business contacts, the Deutz brothers were also well acquainted with other merchants-collectors; indeed, it has been suggested that the ambition and scope of their collections was modeled on those of esteemed business contacts such as Jan Six and Gerard Reynst. The renowned Reynst collection originated in Venice, where Gerard's brother Jan made his fortune in the salt and grain trade. A highly influential spokesman of the Netherlandish merchant community in the Veneto, from time to time Jan also assumed diplomatic assignments from the States General. He shared his love of contemporary Italian art with many other Dutch businessmen in Venice such as Lucas van Uffelen, Jan Niquet, Daniel Nijs, and, in Naples, the merchant-art dealer Gaspar Roomer. The core of the Reynst art cabinet was formed when, in or around 1629, Jan acquired *en bloc* the substantial art, *naturalia* and antiquities collections of a local connoisseur, Andrea Vendramin. These were then shipped to the Reynst residence on the Keizersgracht; after Jan's death in 1646, the works of art he himself had purchased in Venice were shipped to Amsterdam as well. Contemporary visitor accounts attest to the unparalleled riches of this collection, as does a series of engravings commissioned by Gerard Reynst around 1655, the *Caelaturae*.[40]

The Deutz' collections in turn stimulated a younger merchant generation interested in cultural pursuits. Philip de Flines (1640–1700), member of a dynasty of textile traders who were in business with the Deutz firm, brought together an ambitious art gallery of classical sculpture, and Italian paintings and drawings. Also, de Flines assembled a cabinet filled with *naturalia*, and a substantial library in which several botanical treatises testify to his great interest in plants and gardens (His country estate near Haarlem boasted an *orangerie*).[41] A patron of

[40] Logan 1979 and 1991. Recently, I have found an inventory detailing the paintings and antiquities in the Reynst collection (*c.*1650) which I hope to publish in the near future.

[41] On Philip de Flines: Van Veen 1992; Veen 1992a, pp. 132–134.

Gerard de Lairesse, who decorated his Amsterdam canal house, de Flines' fine collections were praised extensively by the poet Govert Bidloo.[42]

Poetic praise of individual paintings or buildings, most of which were owned or commissioned by merchant-collectors, had become sort of a sub-genre in mid-seventeenth century Dutch literary circles. Esteemed poets, notably Joost van den Vondel and Jan Vos, composed lengthy poems on artworks which adorned the houses of wealthy traders and regents. Owning a gallery and having it immortalized in verse became an important means of self-fashioning the Dutch burgher and mercantile elite.[43] In 1648, Vondel composed a poem on 'Mr. Kretzer's Mary Magdalene painted by Titian' (M. Kretzers Ste. Marie Magdalene door Titiaen geschildert). Although we now know the painting was, in fact, not by Titian, its owner, the Amsterdam merchant-art dealer Marten Kretser (*c.*1598–1669), did bring together a collection filled with Italian and Dutch masterpieces; in 1650, the poet Lambert van den Bosch published a 120-stanza poem on this 'Art Cabinet'. As a self-proclaimed '*liefhebber* of the noble art of painting, and art lover', Kretser was firmly rooted in networks connecting connoisseurs, collectors, poets and art dealers in town.[44] For a few years he acted as one of the Amsterdam Theatre directors, occasionally appraised paintings and, for 1,200 guilders a year, employed a still-life painter, Pieter van den Bosch, to work for him full-time (van den Bosch could take Sundays and holidays off).[45] The 1653 and 1654 celebrations of the St. Luke Guild, mentioned above, to which Thomas Asselijn and Vondel contributed poems, were partly organized by Kretser. A rather early example of such poetic praise is Pieter Cornelisz Hooft's 'On the Gallery of Sr. Lus', singing the praise of the collection of merchant-banker Sion Luz (*c.*1548–after 1618). An extremely wealthy financier, Luz was also mentioned in Karel van Mander's overview of art lovers of 1604.

For obvious reasons, wealthy merchants with a sideline in financing were often sought out to oversee political and cultural deals. In the later part of the century, the French-German banker Everhard

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[42] 'Eerzangen aan den heere Filips de Flines, op zijne kunstkamer van beelden, medalien, schilderyen, tekeningen, en prenten': Bidloo 1719, 173–185.

[43] Frijhoff/Spies 2004, pp. 449–451.

[44] Signature of Kretser in a letter of 1656, quoted in Veen 1992a, p. 26.

[45] On Marten Kretser: Goldgar 2007, pp. 62–66; Lammertse 2006, pp. 201 and 231; Unger 1884, pp. 111–119 and Veen 1992a, p. 126.

Jabach (1618–1695) was single-handedly responsible for at least half of the acquisitions for the Louis XIV's galleries.[46] Thanks to his extensive commercial networks, partly consisting of family members, Jabach accumulated a huge collection himself, which could easily be turned into a gallery where paintings, drawings, and antique sculpture were sold. As in the case of Hainhofer, whose Augsburg cabinet doubled as a stockroom, art agents with a financial and commercial background such as Jabach never forgot the commercial aspect of collecting practices. In 1636 Jabach, then just embarking on his financial-artistic career, met with the painter Daniel Mijtens to discuss possible purchases from the collection of the Amsterdam banker-merchant Joachim de Wicquefort (van Wickevoort). As we shall see, Mijtens was employed as an art agent by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, one of the foremost connoisseurs in England, for whom he hoped to buy work by Titian, Dürer and Holbein as well as some valuable incunabula. He spent 1,700 guilders at de Wicquefort's on manuscripts, prints and paintings.[47]

Joachim de Wicquefort (1596–1670) belonged to another Amsterdam merchant dynasty with roots in the Southern Netherlands. His *curriculum vitae* reads as a perfect description of the *mercator sapiens* idealized by Caspar Barlaeus. (In fact, de Wicquefort may have been the inspiration for the 'wise merchant': he was Barleus' 'very best friend', 'a man of culture and taste, a collector of Roman coins and other antiquities' with whom he could talk about poetry and politics.)[48] Starting out as a merchant-banker like his father Gaspar and his eldest brother Gaspar the Younger, Joachim quickly became close with leading intellectuals such as Barlaeus, Hooft, Huygens and Hugo Grotius. He coordinated financial transactions in Paris and Orange on behalf of Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange, and was instrumental in some of the architectural undertakings of the prince, delivering copies of books by Palladio as well as some garden sculpture. Like his brother Abraham de Wicquefort, Joachim was soon sought out to perform diplomatic assignments as well. In 1636 the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel appointed him as resident; in 1655 he was enlisted as a councillor to the Duke of Kurland and in 1659 the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin

[46] On Jabach, see Lammertse 2006, pp. 271–274.
[47] Hervey 1921, pp. 404–405; Gelder 1985, pp. 203–204. See also chapter 8.
[48] As Barlaeus described him to Constantijn Huygens in 1634: Blok 1979, p. 87.

named him as resident agent in The Hague. Furthermore, in 1649 he accepted an invitation from the Grand Duke of Tuscany to become his first political correspondent in Holland. On a regular basis, he sent political reports to clients in Sweden, the German states and France. First in Amsterdam, and later in The Hague, Joachim's collections of art, books, antiquities and curiosities were held in high esteem by the international community of collectors. Vondel praised de Wicquefort as a patron of poetry, whose home was always open to show visitors the many 'treasures of books, letters, statues, paintings, coins, medals, prints and drawings and other collectables'.[49]

Whether or not Joachim de Wicquefort was indeed the inspiration for Barlaeus' *mercator sapiens*, he was indeed its personification. As we have seen, he was no exception: many inhabitants of the early modern world of commerce had high stakes in the world of art. Merchant communities and trade processes, then, are a particularly promising angle from which to reconstruct the mechanics and logistics of collecting. The history of cultural transfer in the early modern period cannot be written without acknowledging the significance of these businessmen as key figures in the system of agency: as facilitators—building and maintaining international financial and postal networks and distribution routes—as representatives and agents; and as collectors themselves.

[49] On de Wicquefort as a collector: Veen 1992b, p. 254; Veen 1997, p. 95. Vondel 1640, ff. A2r–v. For Abraham see also chapter 1.

FIGURES 1–21

Fig. 1. John de Critz the Elder, *Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury*, *c.*1602.

Fig. 2. Palma Giovane, *Prometheus Chained to the Caucasus.*

Fig. 3. Robert Peake, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, *c.*1610.

Fig. 4. William Larkin, *George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham*, *c.*1616.

Fig. 5. [Unknown artist,] *Henry Wotton*, 1620.

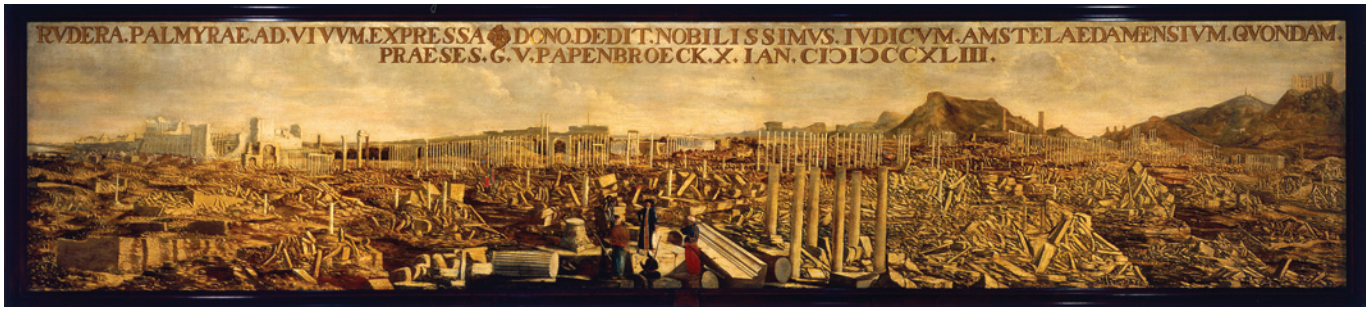


Fig. 6. G. Hofsted van Essen, *View of the ruins of Palmyra*, 1693.

Fig. 7. Caspar Netscher, *Gisbert Cuper*, 1680.

DANIEL NYS WESSALIEN
SIS DITIONIS CLIVENSIS
Interno fruere, o DANIEL, ſplendore, ſerenum
In populos omnes emicat unde ſubar:
Hinc eſt quod plauſu læto, et clamore ſecundo
Virtutum meritò diceriſ eſſe decus.

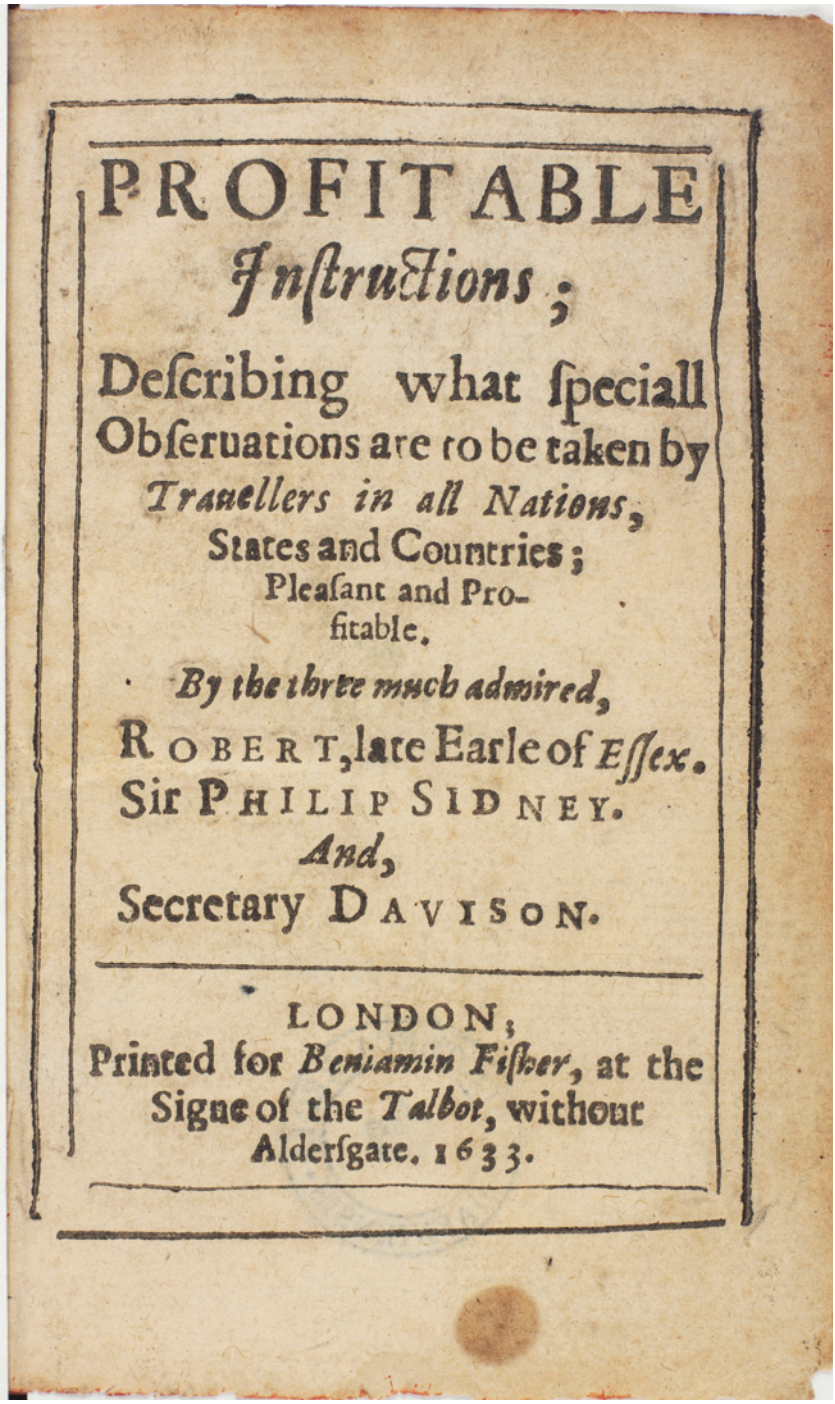
Fig. 8. Odoardo Fialetti, *Daniel Nijs*, in: *La pittura trionfante*, Venice 1615.

LA PITTVRA
TRIONFANTE.
DA GIVLIO CESARE GIGLI,
Scritta in quattro Capitoli,
E Conſacrata:
Al molto Illuſtre, & generoſiſſimo Signore il Signor Daniel Nijs.
IN VENEZIA, CIↃ. IↃCXV.
Da Giouanni Alberti.
BIBLIOTECA NAZIONALE
VENEZIA
DI S. MARCO
4

Fig. 9. Odoardo Fialetti, Title-page from: *La pittura trionfante*, Venice 1615.

Fig. 10. Odoardo Fialetti, *An artist's studio with apprentices drawing from casts and antique busts*, in: *Il vero mode et ordine*, Venice 1608.

Fig. 11. Anthony van Dyck, *Michel le Blon*, *c.*1630–35.



PROFITABLE
Inſtructions;
Deſcribing what ſpeciall
Obſeruations are to be taken by
Trauellers in all Nations,
States and Countries;
Pleaſant and Pro-
fitable.
By the three much admired,
ROBERT, late Earle of *Eſſex.*
Sir PHILIP SIDNEY.
And,
Secretary DAVISON.

LONDON;
Printed for *Beniamin Fiſher,* at the
Signe of the *Talbot,* without
Alderſgate. 1633.

Fig. 12. Title page of Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, and William Davison, *Profitable Instructions*, London 1633.

Fig. 13. The narrow sound between Denmark (Elsinore) and Sweden (Helsingborg), in *Freti Danici Orsundt accuratissima delineatio, cum regis Sueciæ, Daniæ et Hollandia classibg.*, Cologne 1588.

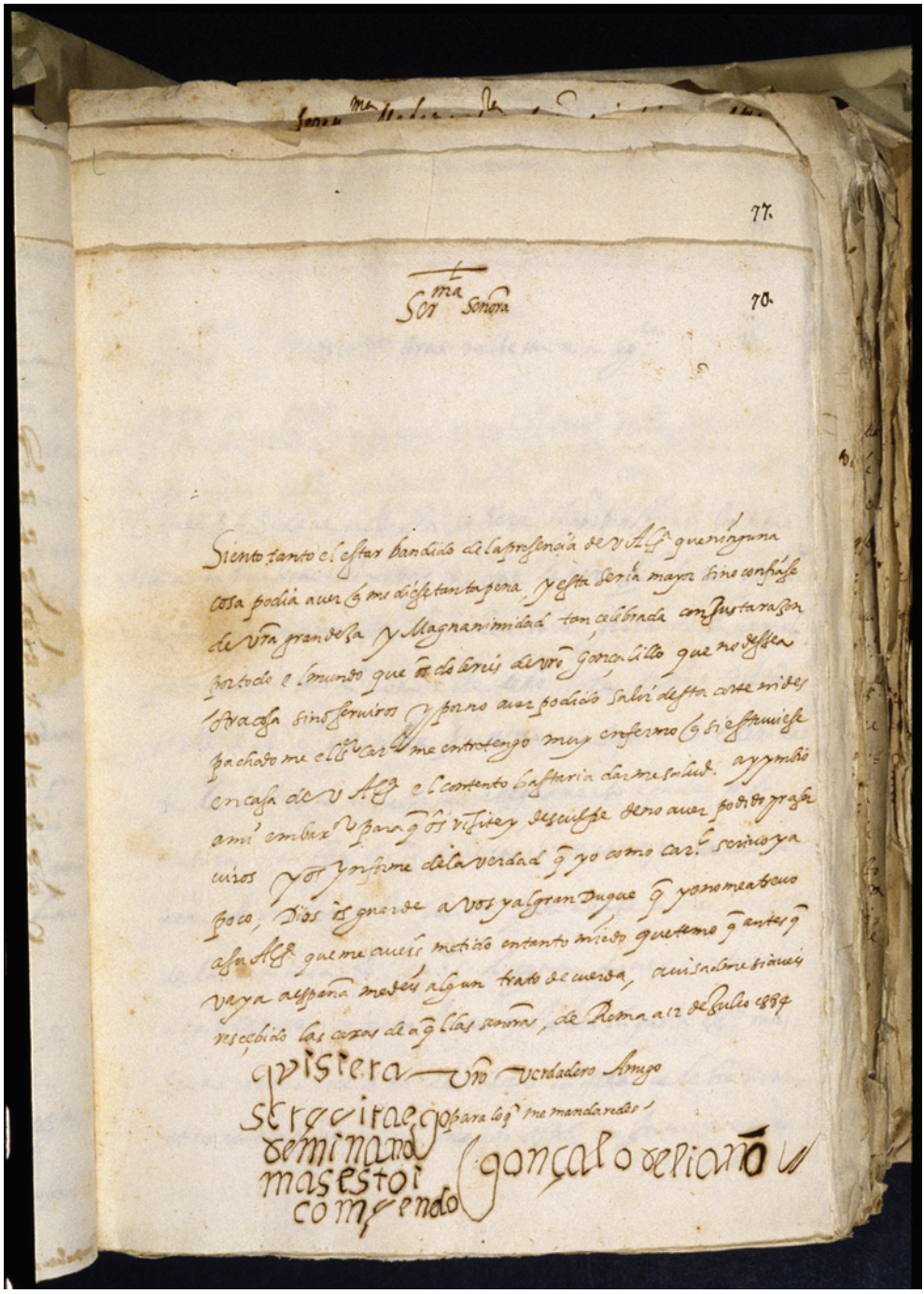


Fig. 14. Letter from Gonzalo de Liaño to Bianca Cappello, 12 July 1584.

Fig. 15. Anthonis Mor, *The Dwarf of Cardinal Granvelle, c.*1550–1560.

Fig. 16. [Flemish artist], *A Dwarf and a Jester*, *c.*1550–1575.

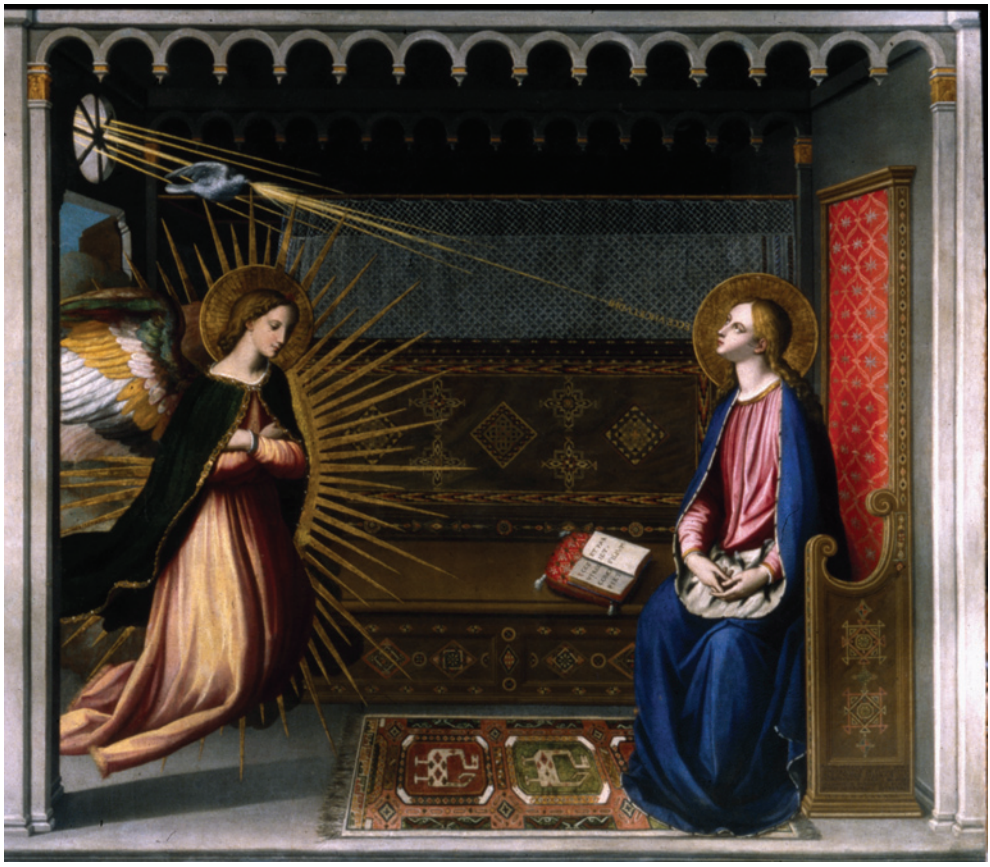


Fig. 17. Copy of the *Annunciation* in SS. Annunziata, Florence, by Alessandro Allori, 1584.

Fig. 18. *Ciborium with Four Evangelists*, before 1582.

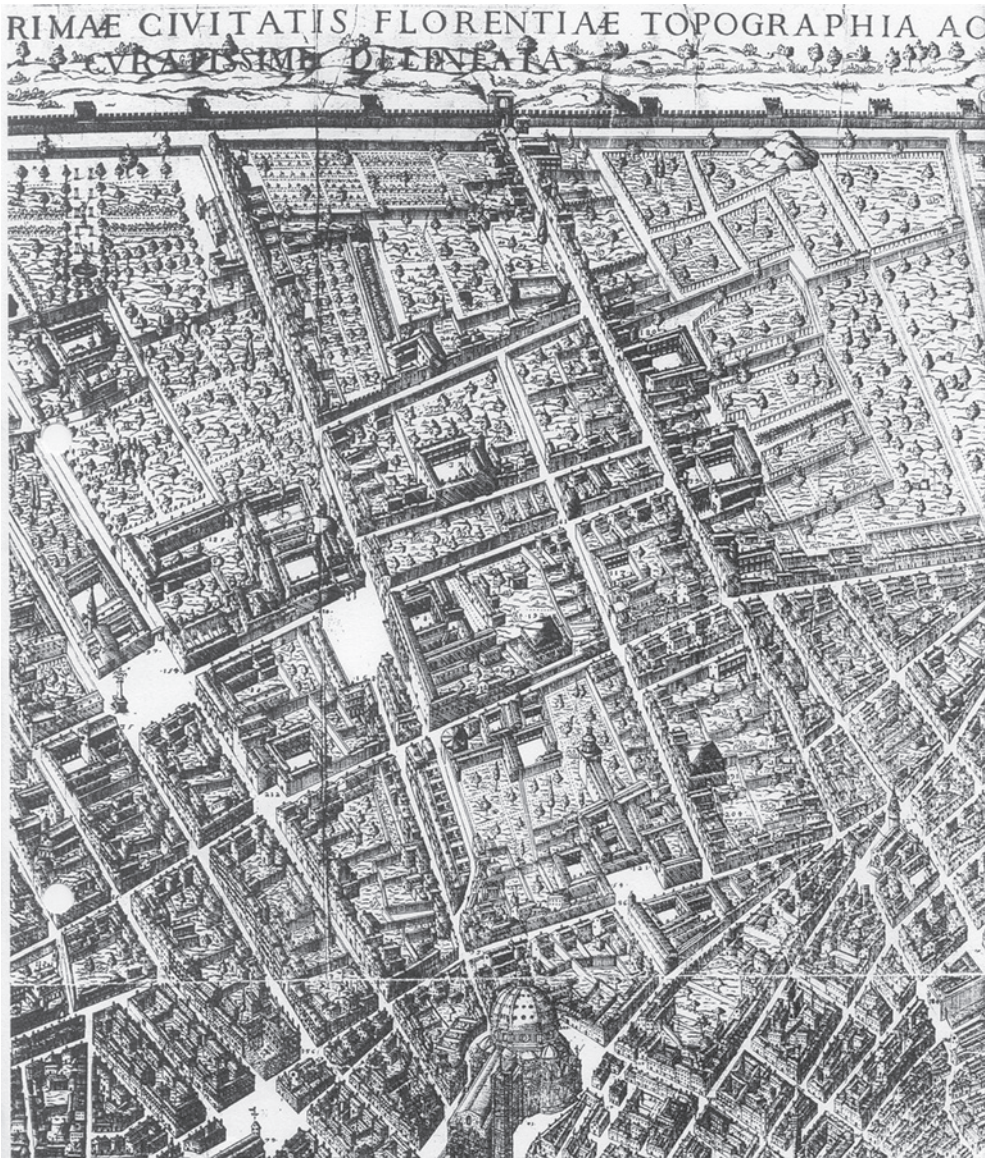


Fig. 19. [*detail of*] Stefano Buonsignori, *Map of Florence*, 1584. Engraved by Bonaventura Billocardi and reproduced from reprint, ed. De Rossi, 1660.

Fig. 20. Angelika Kauffmann, *Portrait of Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein*, 1763/1781.

Fig. 21. Bartolomeo Pinelli, *Burial at the Pyramid of Gaius Cestius*, 1811.

CHAPTER SIX

ACQUIRING ARTISTIC EXPERTISE: THE AGENT DANIEL NIJS AND HIS CONTACTS WITH ARTISTS IN VENICE

Maartje van Gelder

The lifeless body of Daniel Nijs was found in his bed in London on a spring morning in 1647. When the news that he had passed away reached his family members in Amsterdam, they recorded in the family chronicle that fortune had helped Nijs to reach great heights during his life, but that adversity had gradually brought him down until the day of his death.[1] Born in Wesel in 1572 of Netherlandish parents, Nijs spent most of his life in Venice, operating as an intermediary in the international commercial, artistic, and political arena of the first decades of the seventeenth century. He skillfully combined the trade in commodities with the trade in art objects and political information.[2]

Arguably, Nijs' finest hour was the sale of the Gonzaga collection to King Charles I in 1627. Yet how did an immigrant trader in Venice succeed in playing such an important role in one of the most spectacular art deals in early modern Europe? Fortune, as Nijs' relatives observed, may have played its part, but surely there was more to it than that. During the negotiations with the Gonzagas, Nijs showed himself an expert in selecting the most attractive objects from the ducal collection, while demonstrating great skill in dealing with prominent Italian and foreign connoisseurs.[3] This article will investigate how Nijs, a man with a shrewd sense of business, was able to acquire a thorough knowledge of the art market in the years preceding the Gonzaga sale. It will do so by examining Nijs' position in Venice and the relationships

[1] A photocopy of the Nijs family chronicle—the original is part of a private collection—can be found in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam (SA), G551. For the entry on Nijs' death, p. 154, 22 June 1647: '(…) dat ontrent 2 maenden geleden binnen Londen in Engelandt Daniel Nijs overleden was, des morgens doot in sijn bedde gevonden (…). Dese is in sijn leven geclommen door geluck tot eenen graflijcken top; ende weder door tegenspoet geduldich gedaelt tot sijnen sterfdach toe'.

[2] Gelder 2006.

[3] Morselli 2000, p. 147.

he had with local artists. First, however, it will focus on his role in the sale of the Gonzaga collection.

The Gonzaga dynasty, which ruled Mantua from the fourteenth century, spent lavishly to acquire paintings and other precious objects and was renowned for its patronage of the arts. Ludovico II (1412–1478), for instance, employed Andrea Mantegna, while Vincenzo I (1562–1612) hired northern artists such as Frans Pourbus the Younger and Peter Paul Rubens. By the 1620s, the financial problems of the Gonzagas had become so grave that Duke Ferdinand (1613–1626), the family's most extravagant collector, had to consider selling his art collection. Nijs saw the opportunity to play an active role as mediator and started negotiating in 1625, but at a crucial moment Ferdinand died. His successor Vincenzo II (1594–1627) feared the reaction of his subjects to an eventual sale, yet at the same time he desperately needed money. When, after protracted negotiations, Vincenzo finally agreed in 1627, Nijs secretly transported approximately ninety paintings and some two hundred sculptures out of Mantua.[4] Among these works of art were Titian's series of Roman emperors, the *Madonna della Perla* by Raphael, and Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*.[5] Nijs reported to his contact in England, the courtier Endymion Porter, that

> since I came into the world, I have made various contracts, but never more difficult than this one, yet which has succeeded so satisfactorily, and it has baffled first the city of Mantua and then all the Princes of Christendom, both great and small, that we could induce the Duke to sell the [pictures].[6]

The large quantity of Italian masterpieces procured by Nijs instantly upgraded Charles' art collection into one of Europe's finest.[7]

The Gonzaga sale, however, proved to be both the zenith and the end of Nijs' career as a successful art dealer. Duke Vincenzo died in

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[4] Morselli 2000, pp. 65 and 147.

[5] Letter from Nijs to Alessandro Striggi, the Grand Chancellor of Mantua, 24 April 1627 in Luzio 1974, pp. 140–141. The estimated values of the paintings mentioned above can be found in the 1626–1627 inventory of the Gonzaga household, reproduced in Morselli 2000.

[6] '(…) et da poi che sono al mondo ho fatto diversi contratti ma mai il più difficile che questo et che mi sia successo tanto felicemente, havendo primo la città di Mantova et poi tutti li principi della Cristianita et insieme grandi e piccoli fatto estrema maraviglia che si habbia saputo disporre il Ducca Vincenzo a contratarle', Nijs to Porter, 27 April 1628 in Luzio 1974, pp. 154–155.

[7] Brown 1995, p. 50.

December 1627, leaving no successor. Just before French and Spanish troops ransacked Mantua in a bitter war of succession, Nijs managed to purchase the last remnants of the collection and dispatched another shipment of paintings and statues to England.[8] Unfortunately, Charles refused to pay for a consignment he had not ordered and eventually, in 1631, Nijs was forced to declare himself bankrupt and open his home to his creditors.[9] This was the adversity to which the family chronicle referred. In the following years, Nijs would regularly travel to London, attempting to receive some financial satisfaction, and it was on one of those journeys that he passed away.

The tale of Daniel Nijs' role in the Gonzaga sale and his subsequent ruin is familiar to art historians and historians studying the early modern art market. It is much less clear how Nijs succeeded in rising to such dizzying heights. Who was this merchant and how did he become an intermediary in an art deal that created a sensation throughout Europe? Secondary literature concerning the Gonzaga sale usually depicts Nijs as a cunning art dealer of proverbial unreliability.[10] His background is often described as being as shady as his character, and his geographical origins as unclear as his religious denomination: he is sometimes portrayed as being French, Flemish or German; as a Reformed or even a Jewish merchant.[11] Yet there is sufficient information available to establish his identity and gauge his position in early seventeenth-century Venice.

An immigrant background characterizes Nijs' early years, a feature he shares with many other early modern intermediaries and agents.[12] His Calvinist parents left the southern provinces of the Netherlands in the late 1560s in order to escape persecution by the Council of

[8] For the Mantuan conflict: Parrot 1997.

[9] Howarth 1981, pp. 97–100; Luzio 1974, pp. 75–77, 159–167. For documents relating to Nijs' bankruptcy, see Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV), Notarile atti, b. 8433, c. 497, 19 May 1631.

[10] For example: Brotton 2006, pp. 60–62; Brown 1995, pp. 230–231; Howarth 1985, pp. 59–63, 143, 159, 160–161, 205.

[11] Betcherman 1961, p. 329; Brotton 2006, p. 60; Howarth 1985, p. 61; Howarth 1981, p. 95. Luzio assumed that Nijs was of Jewish origin, but did not substantiate this claim, see Luzio 1974, p. 60. This idea then found its way into later—especially Italian—historiography, see for instance Morselli 2000, p. 148; the introduction to Gigli 1996, p. 12; Savini Branca 1964, p. 231. See Aurenhammer 1999, p. 155, n. 21.

[12] For the significance of an agent's mobility and immigrant background: Keblusek 2006, pp. 11–12.

Troubles. They settled in the German town of Wesel, where Daniel was born. Other members of the Nijs family also fled, but opted to move to Amsterdam.[13] They were all part of the large-scale migration of Southern Netherlanders seeking refuge from the upheaval caused by the revolt against Habsburg Spain. This so-called 'Antwerp diaspora' dispersed merchants and artisans from the southern provinces of the Netherlands across the trading centers of early modern Europe.[14] The diffusion of his family over towns in Germany and the Low Countries would give Nijs access to an extensive commercial network, greatly facilitating his activities as an intermediary.[15]

In the late 1590s Nijs settled in Venice, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Europe, where he worked in the firm of two relatives, Pietro and Giacomo Gabri.[16] They were part of a larger community of Netherlandish traders established in Venice. The *nazione fiamminga*, or Netherlandish trading nation, developed into a formidable presence during the last decade of the sixteenth century, when large-scale maritime trade between the Low Countries and the Mediterranean started.[17] The Netherlandish immigrant traders often originated from the Southern Netherlands, the provinces which traditionally had commercial contacts with Italy, yet many had family members who had settled in Amsterdam, the new trade center which extended its commerce to every corner of the world. As Venice rapidly lost its key position in the European economy, it became increasingly dependent on those merchants with Amsterdam contacts. The Gabris, Nijs, and their Netherlandish colleagues based in Venice imported large quantities of grain, salted fish and even pepper and spices—once the mainstays of Venetian trade—from Northern Europe, while exporting precious silks, wine, olive oil, and currants.[18]

The first decade of the seventeenth century saw Daniel Nijs reach economic independence. By 1607, both Pietro and Giacomo had left Venice, and Nijs had taken over as the main representative of the family firm. Three years later, to complement his new status, he traveled

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[13] SA, G551, p. 155. The family chronicle forms the basis for Van Eeghen 1968 (for Daniel Nijs esp. pp. 75–78). See also Fontaine Verwey 1969b.

[14] Brulez 1960; Gelderblom 2003.

[15] For Nijs' use of his commercial network in disseminating letters and publications for his political contacts: Gelder 2006.

[16] Brulez/Devos 1986, for example nos. 997; 1020 and 1298.

[17] Gelder 2004.

[18] For the community of Netherlandish merchants in Venice: Gelder 2009.

to Amsterdam to marry Cecilia Muysson, like himself a descendant of Southern Netherlandish migrants.[19] The following year the couple returned to Venice, where Daniel continued to expand his business. In fact, Duke Ferdinand of Mantua was one of his customers in the early 1620s. Nijs supplied luxury items such as mirrors, furs, vases, and perfumes, and by the time of Ferdinand's death, the Gonzaga court owed Nijs some 4,000 *ducatoni*.[20] This shows that well before his role in the Gonzaga sale, Nijs already had frequent connections with the Mantuan court.

Nijs used his business contacts throughout Europe not just to import and export goods, but also as a network to convey politically sensitive information for Venetian politicians and foreign ambassadors. For example, he acted regularly as a go-between for the Servite friar Paolo Sarpi. As its legal and theological advisor, Sarpi had defended the interest of the Venetian Republic during the Interdict, the conflict between Venice and the Papacy in 1606. During that time he even explored the possibilities of allying the Venetian Republic to Protestant states, such as England and the Dutch Republic, thereby taking a stance against the pope as well as the Habsburg powers. Daniel Nijs regularly provided Sarpi with information and assisted him in his communications with potential Protestant allies. In Venice, foreign envoys were forbidden to have direct contact with Venetian statesmen, but diplomats did not operate in complete isolation: there were secret channels through which information could be communicated, and indirect contact could be established through agents, secretaries, and spies. In the friar's correspondence with the English ambassadors in Venice, Daniel Nijs is often referred to as 'questo nostro amico' (our mutual friend) and when Sarpi explained to the ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton, who was posted in Venice between 1610 and 1616, that Venetian laws forbade them from meeting, he also suggested that they stay in contact through 'signor Daniele', a clear reference to Nijs.[21] During Carleton's time as ambassador in The Hague between 1616 and 1625, Nijs continued to send him regular letters with political information.[22] Nijs also played a crucial role in smuggling Sarpi's manuscript of the *History of the Council of Trent* out of Venice. Sarpi showed himself highly critical

[19] SA, G551, p. 23.
[20] Luzio 1974, pp. 53 and 60.
[21] Sarpi 1969, p. 646.
[22] Raines 2006.

of the failure of the Catholic Church to reunite Christianity at Trent, rendering it impossible to publish the book in an Italian state. Nijs sent the provocative manuscript bit by bit via his correspondents to London, where it was translated and published in 1619.[23]

Having established Daniel Nijs' position as a Netherlandish merchant in Venice with contacts among the Venetian elite and foreign diplomats, it is also possible to shed light on another aspect. In contrast to the speculative suggestions in historiography, Nijs' religious affiliation is in fact quite clear. Like his parents, he was a Calvinist. Although the Venetian Republic actively persecuted heterodox natives and did not allow foreign Protestants their own chapel, Nijs' position as a foreign merchant with international contacts, which Venice needed to maintain trade at a viable level, allowed him a significant prerogative. His home was one of the few places where worship by foreign Protestants was tolerated by the Venetian state. In 1630, the papal nuncio protested that Protestant services now occurred in no fewer than four different places in Venice, including the home of Daniel Nijs.[24] But his home did not only function as a focal point for Protestant worship; it also became one of the sights for foreigners visiting Venice in the early seventeenth century.

Constantijn Huygens, who had come to Venice as secretary to the Dutch ambassador François van Aerssen, visited Nijs' home on 1 July 1620. Huygens afterwards recorded in his travel diary that the merchant possessed an infinite number of paintings, sculptures, and an ebony cabinet filled with rare miniature paintings, medals, shells, and other curiosities. To examine the cabinet's contents, he wrote, would require at least three days, while it would take even longer to describe it.[25] Huygens left it at that, but fortunately other visitors described Nijs' collection in greater detail. The architect Vincenzo Scamozzi reported on the most important Venetian art collections, including the one assembled by Nijs, in his treatise *L'idea della architettura universale*, published in 1615.[26]

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[23] Cozzi 1956; Gelder 2006, p. 247; Yates 1944.

[24] Gelder 2009, pp. 125–126.

[25] Huygens 2003, p. 150: 'une infinité de peintures et statuës antiques, dans le pourpris d'une petite armoire en forme de table d'ebene (…) tant de rares tableaux, de medailles, de coquilles et semblables curiositez, qu'il faudroit trois jours à bien examiner le tout, non qu'à en faire la description'.

[26] Scamozzi 1615, p. 306.

Scamozzi was born in Vicenza in 1548 and was educated in the principles of building and classical architecture by his father, a land-surveyor, carpenter, and architect. After Andrea Palladio's death, Vincenzo received several commissions from the Venetian government and became one of the leading architects in the Veneto in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.[27] *L'idea della architettura universale* was an attempt to describe an all-inclusive architectural system by confronting the classical ideal with examples of contemporary design. Hence Scamozzi was better placed than most to assess the value and scope of Nijs' *studio di pittura*.

Scamozzi praised the gallery of Nijs in his discussion of the ideal *portico* (reception hall), a space often used as a picture or sculpture gallery in Venetian *palazzi*. He describes how the 'honorato mercante' had assembled a collection consisting of a great number of sculptures, including some forty statues and nearly eighty heads—which Nijs had partly purchased from the collection of the Venetian patrician Simone Zeno—as well as torsos and bas-reliefs.[28] According to Scamozzi, Daniel further owned sixty paintings, partly derived from the Corradino collection, and twenty portraits by celebrated painters. The cabinet which had impressed Huygens also received the attention of Scamozzi. The architect described its contents of gems, miniatures, and enamels, judging it to be worth 10,000 *scudi*.[29] The cabinet would later be bought by Lord Arundel's agent, William Petty. At that point it consisted of 132 intaglios and 126 cameos, both antique and Renaissance. Scamozzi describes that Nijs also possessed all the drawings (presumably engravings) of Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden, a great number of other prints by the hands of 'the most excellent painters', as well as a collection of seashells. To give such a detailed account, Scamozzi must have seen Nijs' collection with his own eyes and have known the provenance of its objects well. That the merchant and the architect knew each other personally becomes apparent from a notarial deed which shows that, in the same year *L'idea della architettura universale* was published, Nijs and his business partner Giovanni Falconieri stood surety for Scamozzi when he needed a loan

[27] For a brief description of Scamozzi's career: Ottenheym 2003, pp. 8–9.
[28] Favaretto 1990, pp. 83 and 156–157.
[29] Hill 1999, p. 143. For a fictional, yet well-researched biography of William Petty, which also features Daniel Nijs: Lapierre 2004.

of 300 ducats.[30] His contact with Scamozzi and the detailed description of his *portico* in the architect's treatise guaranteed Nijs that his collection was placed on the same level as those most renowned in Venice.

Scamozzi's description indicates that, either before his departure to the Dutch Republic or shortly after his return to Venice in 1611, Nijs must have begun to cultivate an avid interest in works of art, resulting in an impressive collection displayed in his home in the Venetian parish of Santa Marina. The second decade of the seventeenth century saw Nijs develop into an art dealer as well as a collector: in 1613, Carleton, then English ambassador in Venice, engaged him to assemble a large amount of artwork. It took Nijs two years, but in 1615 he was able to deliver a consignment of fifteen Venetian paintings, including works by Tintoretto, Veronese, and Titian, as well as 29 cases of antique sculptures in marble.[31]

A lesser known account of his art gallery is even more revealing regarding Nijs' local connections with artistic circles. In 1615, a small booklet on art came out in Venice, titled *La pittura trionfante*. It was written in verse by Giulio Cesare Gigli, a poet about whom very little is known, except that he was born in Brescia and probably lived in Venice when he published *La pittura trionfante* and a few other poems.[32] Gigli dedicated his booklet to Daniel Nijs, indicating that the merchant had provided him with financial support or had guaranteed to purchase a significant number of copies. An engraved portrait, showing Nijs in his early forties, accompanied the dedication (Fig. 8).[33]

Gigli explains that Nijs merits the dedication because of the exquisite *studio di pittura* that he has created, the quality of which, Gigli assures the reader, he has judged with his own eyes. With its lifelike portraits, landscapes, and historical pieces, the watercolor drawings, the pen-drawn 'poesie' (mythologies), and the pencil drawings of 'capricci', Nijs' whole collection was proof that, in the words of Gigli,

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[30] Brulez/Devos 1986, nrs 3172 and 3602. A year after Scamozzi's death, the debt was taken over by Justus Sadeler, a Netherlandish publisher, engraver, and print dealer in Venice: Meijer 1991, p. 77. Scamozzi's heirs paid off Sadeler with books from the architect's estate, in all probability the remaining 670 copies of the *L'idea della architettura universale*, and also the loose illustrations for the same treatise: Sénéchal 1990, pp. 27–28.

[31] Hill 2003, p. 214.

[32] The other poems are *La fallace magia* (1614), *I rivali* (1614) and *La gara amorosa* (1616). On Gigli: Spagnolo 1996.

[33] Gigli 1615.

painting truly triumphed. Although Gigli devotes more attention to the paintings than to the other objects in Nijs' collection, such as the naturalia, he also encourages the reader to seat himself at the 'sede della MERAVIGLIA', the much-praised cabinet of curiosities with its contents of precious medals and gems.

The works of both Scamozzi and Gigli effectively made Nijs' reputation as a collector. In the early 1620s, cardinals, Protestant ambassadors, and noblemen alike frequented the Nijs residence in Santa Marina to admire the assembled works of art. For instance, van Aerssen's successor, Johan Berck, paid a visit in the company of Philip Maurice, Count of Hanau-Münzenberg, in May 1624. Later that year Cardinal Alessandro Orsini went to see Nijs' collection of paintings.[34] These visits indicate that the collection was not intended as a space dedicated to private contemplation, but that it had a very public character. The quality of the collection, with the spectacular cabinet as its highlight, turned Nijs' home into an almost obligatory sight for privileged travelers.[35] Not only did the collection enhance Nijs' prestige, it also allowed him to attract highly placed clients necessary for his work as an art dealer and as a political agent.

The relationship with Gigli brought Nijs other advantages. In *La pittura trionfante*, Gigli describes a large number of painters, ranging from the minor to the acclaimed, and comments on the characteristics of their styles. In the preface, Gigli mentions that this booklet merely formed the prelude to a much more elaborate and illustrated work he intended to publish, but which never materialized.[36] Gigli's main aim in the poem was to describe those painters neglected or underrated by Vasari in his *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori et architettori italiani*, first published in 1550, which favored Florentine art. Ultimately, Gigli promoted northern Italian painting, offering a classification of artists according to their town of origin.[37] His knowledge of different local schools and his command of technical artistic

[34] For both Berck's and Orsini's visits: Gelder 2009, p. 177, n.32.

[35] On collecting as a means of acquiring prestige in Italy: Olmi 1985.

[36] Gigli also refers to this more extensive work in the index: 'Racconto de' pittori celebrati in questa e nell'altra opera non ancora stampata'.

[37] For the position of Gigli's work in the anti-Vasari literature: Agosti/Ginsburg 1996, pp. 7–17; Aurenhammer 1999, pp. 155–156. Morselli suggests that both Scamozzi and Gigli were inspired by the Gonzaga gallery when describing the ideal manner in which to exhibit paintings, pointing to the close connections between the Mantua and Venetian cultural milieu: Morselli 2000, p. 118.

vocabulary would certainly have attracted the attention of Nijs. The fact that Gigli was as familiar with marginal Venetian painters as he was with artists such as Veronese and Titian made him a valuable source of information on the quality of various paintings on the market, essential to a prominent collector and art dealer such as Nijs.

Gigli's poem, moreover, also gives us greater insight into other contacts Nijs had in the Venetian artistic milieu. Gigli explains that he was introduced to Nijs' art gallery by the painter Odoardo Fialetti. While Gigli's position within Venetian society remains rather vague, Fialetti was a well-known and respected artist. He was born in Bologna in 1573, but moved to Venice at an early age, where he studied under Tintoretto. He then spent some time in Rome to acquaint himself with the works of Michelangelo, Raphael, and Caravaggio before returning to Venice where he collaborated with Giacomo Palma il Giovane, the most esteemed Venetian artist since Tintoretto's death in 1594.[38] While in Venice, Fialetti and Nijs must have come into close contact.

A prolific engraver and renowned draughtsman, Fialetti had drawn the merchant's portrait and executed the engraving included in *La pittura trionfante*.[39] Fialetti also engraved the work's title page, following a design by Palma il Giovane (Fig. 9). It depicts the allegorical figure of Painting leading artists in a triumphal procession. The first painter following the chariot is Tintoretto, dressed in a toga, and right behind his teacher is Fialetti himself, wearing a shorter tunic.[40] Fialetti also contributed directly to Nijs' art collection when the merchant requested pen drawings. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, in his work on Bolognese painters published in 1678, commented that Fialetti made life-sized pen drawings of the seven Liberal Arts for 'Daniel Nis', one of the most prominent traders of the city, who was himself 'extremely knowledgeable of painting and held a commission from the English

[38] Bury 2001, p. 226; Donzelli/Pilo 1967, pp. 177–178; Pallucchini 1981, pp. 78 and 80–81.

[39] Aurenhammer 1999, p. 156, questions whether Fialetti executed Nijs' portrait, but the artist's monogram is clearly visible on the upper left corner of the pedestal. On Fialetti's drawing skills, Malvasia remarked: 'era in lui la più singola delle prerogative il disegnar di penna, trateggiando con tal franchezza, che pareano cose intagliate dal più squisito bolino': Malvasia 1841, p. 235.

[40] Malvasia 1841, p. 314: 'Il Gigli che nella sua Pittura Trionfante, alla quale tagliò il Fialetti il frontespizio, come dalla sua marca si vede, ritraendovi il suo maestro presso il carro, colla tioga e se stesso a lui presso, in abito curto e succinto'.

king to buy works of art'.[41] According to Malvasia, these pen drawings were as exquisite as engravings.

Not only did Fialetti provide Nijs with high quality pen drawings, he also offered the merchant his judgment on the quality of paintings offered on the market. But, perhaps even more importantly, Fialetti was able to provide Nijs direct access to prospective wealthy clients. One of Fialetti's pupils, Marco Boschini, tells us that no ambassador left Venice without having come to Fialetti to buy his paintings or drawings. They also sought out Fialetti's advice when they wanted to buy paintings of Venetian masters, on which he was deemed an expert.[42] For instance, Henry Wotton, the English ambassador who served three diplomatic missions in Venice, had been a patron of Fialetti since at least 1606.[43] The painter helped Wotton acquire works of art, which he could then donate to his English patrons in an attempt to acquire political favors. At the end of his life, Wotton left Charles I no fewer than five paintings attributed to Fialetti: four large three-quarter portraits of Venetian doges and the painting depicting Wotton's audience with Doge Donà in 1606. Fialetti catered to the diplomatic taste that enabled him to obtain important commissions.

But Fialetti's contacts with foreign visitors went much further. Building on his reputation as an excellent draughtsman, Fialetti also produced the earliest Italian manual for anatomic drawing, *Il vero modo et ordine per dissegnar tutte le parti, et membra del corpo humano* (1608), intended for a public of amateurs.[44] His plates provided the

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[41] Malvasia 1841, p. 235: 'Per il sig. Daniel Nis, mercante fiammingo, de' primi negoziatori della città, intendentissimo di pittura, che teneva commissioni del Re d'Inghilterra di comprare appunto e quadri e disegni, fece le sett' Arti liberali, mezze figure grandi al naturale di penna, così esquisite, che se fosero state intagliate non sarebbero state sì belle'.

[42] Malvasia 1841, p. 235: 'nè capitava in Venezia ambasciator di teste coronate, e d'altri prencipi che non facessero capo da lui, sì per pitture di sua mano come per disegni, e di più lo ricercavano sempre di consiglio nell'acquistar quadri vecchi de' nostri singolari pittori, delle maniere dei quali tenev'egli un'esattissima cognizione'.

[43] Pearsall Smith 1907, vol. 2, p. 216. The painting of Wotton's audience with Doge Leonardo Donà, now at Hampton Court Palace, is attributed to Fialetti. On Wotton and Fialetti: Panzarin 2000. See also chapter 2 in this volume.

[44] *Il vero modo et ordine* was published by Justus Sadeler, who was probably one of the few publishers in Venice at this time who could incorporate copper engravings into printed books. Sadeler also maintained links with the Gonzagas. For instance, he provided the engravings illustrating Antonio Possevino the Younger's history of the house of Gonzaga in 1617. These illustrations reproduced Domenico Fetti's paintings which decorated the Palazzo Ducale at Mantua. It is therefore probable that Sadeler had visited Mantua himself: Sénéchal 1990, pp. 26 and 30–32.

beginning artist with models of each part of the human body in printed form. One plate demonstrated what could be aspired to once one had mastered the earlier stages, showing an artist's studio with what appear to be apprentices drawing from casts and antique busts (Fig. 10).[45] Boschini later stated that every Venetian nobleman wishing to develop his artistic skills came to Fialetti's studio to learn the principles of drawing.[46]

Fialetti's popularity as a teacher to prominent foreigners and his contacts with aristocratic amateur artists must have been a valuable asset to Nijs. One of Fialetti's pupils was Aletheia Talbot, wife of the art collecting Lord Arundel.[47] The painter gave Aletheia drawing lessons when she stayed in Venice in the early 1620s, for which he received a handsome reward.[48] A few years earlier, Fialetti had dedicated an engraving of Diana to Arundel and his son.[49] Although there is no direct correspondence between Nijs and Lady Arundel during this period, after her return to England their association would last for nearly twenty years.[50] Again, Nijs' activities as a political informant and as an art dealer overlapped. As long as she stayed in Venice, Nijs regularly reported on Lady Arundel's moves in Venetian political circles to Carleton in The Hague, while upon her return to London, the merchant sent her a model of the Ducal Palace in Mantua as a gift for Charles, future king of England, possibly as an appetizer for the Gonzaga sale.[51]

Approximately twenty years after his arrival in Venice, Daniel Nijs was far from a shadowy figure, but rather a very active and successful immigrant trader in Venice with a broad network of correspondents at his disposal. This allowed him to become one of the suppliers of luxury goods from Venice to the Gonzaga court. At the same time, Nijs was in contact with prominent Venetian figures, such as Paolo Sarpi, to

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[45] Bury 2001, pp. 198–200. After 1608, the exact date being unknown, *Il vero modo et ordine* was revised and published under the title *Tutte le parti del corpo humano*.

[46] See Malvasia 1841, p. 234, who consulted Boschini on Fialetti.

[47] Howarth 1998.

[48] Malvasia 1841, p. 235.

[49] Fialetti dedicated the engravings 'A gl'Ill.mi S.ri e Pro.ni/ Col.mi i S.ri Baron, e/ Cavalier da Rondel': *Bartsch*, p. 218. Lord Maltravers, Arundel's eldest son was a connoisseur himself: Howarth 2006, p. 20.

[50] Hill 1999, p. 59.

[51] See, for instance, Nijs' letters to Carleton on 11 February 1621 and 18 November 1622, NASP 84/105/120; NASP 99/24/161. Also Hill 1999, p. 59; Luzio 1974, p. 68.

whom he lent his services as a trafficker in political information, while forming part of the intelligence network of the English ambassador Carleton. Nijs had also succeeded in assembling an impressive collection of pictures, statues, engravings, and *naturalia* which turned his home into an obligatory sight for art-loving travelers and advertised his artistic acumen. Both his correspondence network and his own collection allowed him to act as a political informant while also enabling him to position himself as an agent in the international art market. His previous contacts with the Mantuan court, his relationships with English patrons, and his knowledge of the Italian art market subsequently would allow Nijs to play such an important role in the Gonzaga sale.

Whereas his correspondents in Amsterdam, London, and Cologne gave Nijs the necessary international contacts, his ability to operate as an agent in the art market was firmly grounded in contacts with Italian artists. Firstly, Scamozzi and Gigli successfully publicized the splendor of Nijs' own art collection through their works. Secondly, figures such as Fialetti and Gigli supplied the merchant with artistic expertise, an indispensable quality in the competitive early modern art market. Thirdly, Fialetti gave Nijs local access to elite art lovers, further enhancing the chances of drawing visiting diplomats and potential customers to his *studio di pittura*. Hence Nijs' relationships with the Venetian painter Fialetti, the poet Gigli, and the architect Scamozzi were of vital importance, providing a sound local foundation for his international network. By the time the Gonzaga collection came up for sale, Nijs was able to couple his entrepreneurial instinct with a profound knowledge of the art market.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GARCÍA DE YLLÁN: A MERCHANT IN SILVER, BREAD AND BULLETS AND A BROKER IN ART, 1591–1655

Maurits A. Ebben

1654 must have been one of the best years of García de Yllán's life.[1] He had the great honor of entertaining Christina, the recently abdicated Queen of Sweden, as his personal guest during her stay in Antwerp.[2] The eccentric queen held court in the Portuguese banker's splendid mansion, where she received dignitaries from the Habsburg Empire.[3] Her host did everything in his power to make her stay in Antwerp as enjoyable as possible, organizing a feast in her honor at Groeningenhof Castle.[4] Yllán, magnificently attired, led the queen in a parade of six coaches, each drawn by a team of six horses, to the luxurious country estate not far from the city. At the request of the queen herself, the festivities at Groeningenhof began with a guided tour on horseback of the extensive lands that made up the estate. Back at the castle, the guests enjoyed a sumptuous banquet to the accompaniment of songs, music and celebratory cannon fire. It was late in the evening by the time the company got back to Antwerp, to be greeted by a spectacular reception; with their flickering torches, the civic guards on duty and

[1] In Ebben 2009; 1996 and 1995 I wrote about García de Yllán's business interests without focusing specifically on his interest in art and the art trade.

[2] Kellenbenz 1966, pp. 190–191; Prims 1941, p. 1. Gualdo Priorato 1656, p. 38: 'Alli 12 agosto terminò suo viaggio in Anversa, entrandovi privatament col prender allogio in casa di Don Garzia d'Yliano Portughese, soggeto de più ricchi, principali quella famosa città (…)'.

[3] Yllán had bought a palatial residence in Lange Nieuwstraat (now number 94) from his compatriot Diego Pardo in 1641. Stadsarchief Antwerpen, Notarieel Archief (SAAN) 2468 f. 216; Gualdo Priorato 1656, pp. 38–44. Yllán also owned a house in Ridderstraat in Brussels. In 1652 he bought the Bornival estate just outside Nijvel, with the accompanying castle. SAAN 2.433, f. 77; 2.468, f. 216; 2.475, f. 388.

[4] Cantillon 1777, p. 28. The castle belonged to Yllán's close friend and compatriot Francisco López Franco y Feo.

the many citizens who had awaited the return of the queen and her host presented a fairytale sight.[5]

During Christina of Sweden's stay in the Southern Netherlands, García was not just her host; he also emerged as her banker, diplomatic representative and purveyor to the royal household.[6] He had all sorts of exotic produce and luxury goods brought from Amsterdam.[7] He managed her extensive art collection, part of which was used to lend a royal air to his mansion. As the queen's financial adviser, the Portuguese was closely involved in the purchase of art and may even have sold her Brussels tapestries and paintings by Flemish masters or at least acted as intermediary in the transactions and advanced the necessary funds.[8]

It is no coincidence that García de Yllán had become Christina of Sweden's principal banker in the Southern Netherlands and had been put in charge of her art collection. Yllán was a highly successful merchant with a worldwide network of trade contacts and he was an equally experienced international banker. For almost thirty years he had served the Spanish king by financing his armies in the Netherlands and supplying them with food and munitions. His business in Antwerp had grown to become one of the most important financial pillars of the Spanish army in the north of Europe. In the 1640s he also became involved in the art trade. Commissioned by Spanish noblemen in the Netherlands and Spain, he ordered tapestries and paintings, in most cases advancing the payment for them.

How did the firm of García de Yllán become involved in the art trade? What was the organization, orientation and scope of his dealings? García de Yllán's career as a provider of credit to the King of Spain is not an isolated case; it is illustrative of a number of Portuguese, Portuguese-Jewish and other entrepreneurs who did business with and for the Spanish monarchy in the seventeenth century. The experiences of other early modern international traders working outside the Spanish system are also comparable to those of the Portuguese mer-

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[5] Stadsarchief Antwerpen, Privilegekamer (SAAPK) Collegiaal aktenboek, 1653–1655, 16 September 1654; Passen 1988, p. 179.

[6] Although Christina was no longer a head of state, she retained the right to appoint diplomats. She appointed García de Yllán resident in the Spanish Netherlands. Archivo General de Simancas (AGS) Estado legajo (leg.) 2364, ff. 63, 64, 99; Algemeen Rijksarchief van België (ARAB) Geheime Raad, Spanish Era, 313.

[7] SAAN 2.478, ff. 92v and 95v.

[8] SAAN 2.479, f. 511; Denucé 1932, pp. 176–192; Burenstam 1891, pp. 9 and 12.

chant's business. Some of them too—leaving individual characteristics aside—became involved in the art trade as a result of their commercial enterprises.

The reception of the former Queen of Sweden was without doubt a high point in the life of García de Yllán. She was perhaps the best evidence of his success as an international financier. But before he reached that point, Yllán had had a long, hard road to travel.

García de Yllán Barraza was born in Lisbon in 1591. He was the second son of a merchant from the area around Portalegre, a Portuguese town across the border from Extremadura in Spain. García's father, who came from a family of Jews who had converted to Christianity, was a businessman who had probably moved to the Portuguese capital some years before the birth of his second son.[9] Yllán grew up with his parents in Lisbon. They must have been well-to-do, for they were able to send García to the University of Coimbra to study law. When he graduated he set up a law firm, and at the same time started doing business with members of his family in other countries.[10] He had trading contacts with his older brother Gonzalo Barraza Falcón, who had an office in Cartagena de Indias. He had dealings with his younger brother Fernando Díaz de Yllán, who was in Lima, and with relatives in Valencia and Amsterdam. He also worked with compatriots in Seville, Antwerp, London and Hamburg. In short, the Portuguese merchant had a worldwide network of trading partners.[11] His worldwide commercial contacts increased the competitiveness of his firm when it came to the acquisition of contracts from the Spanish crown.

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[9] Archivo Histórico Nacional Madrid (AHN) Inquisición (Inq.) libro 1103, ff. 458–463r; 1105, ff. 802r–824v, 1107, ff. 29v–36r; Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Notarieel Archief (SANot) 645 b, 1040; Doop-, trouw- en begrafenisregister (DTB) 675, f. 15; 676, ff. 31 and 62; 677, f. 9; 678, f. 130; SAAN 2.444, ff. 137r–v, 142; Boyajian 1983, p. 35; Revah 1957, pp. 83–84.

[10] Boyajian 1983, p. 35.

[11] Archivo General de la Nación México (AGN.Mex.) Inquisición (Inq.) leg. 383 exp. 18; AHN Inq. libro 1012, ff. 158–159; 1103, ff. 8r–9v; leg. 1.878 no. 1; Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid (AHPM) 3741 f. 917; 3.743 f. 44, 88, 134, 209, 343–344; SANot. 645 B 1040; SAAN 2.431, ff. 181 and 280v; 2.438, ff. 144v, 151 and 188; 2.467, ff. 39–40 and 220; Boyajian 1983, p. 35; Denucé 1927, pp. 33–36; Ebben 1995, pp. 171–172; García de Proodián 1966, pp. 46 and 533; Israel 1982, p. 338; Kellenbenz 1985, pp. 131, 163, 167 and 275; Rodríguez Vicente 1960, pp. 383–384. Yllán's contacts in Amsterdam included his cousin Juan de Yllán Barraza, who founded the first Jewish community on Curaçao. SAAN 2478, f. 670; Emmanuel 1970, pp. 39–43, 68–69; Israel 1985, pp. 212 and 227; Kaplan, 1982; Loker 1983.

The Spanish kings routinely turned to traders in order to solve the fundamental financial, material and logistical problems that cropped up when their policies were carried out. In view of the geographical spread of the Spanish empire, its size and the fact that most of the funds came from Castile and its overseas territories, it was important that bankers could both provide credit and ensure the transfer of funds to places where the king needed them to pay and provision his armies. In general, Spanish merchants were not as wealthy as foreign traders and their trade networks usually did not extend beyond the Iberian Peninsula or even their own region. Charles V consequently negotiated loans mainly with foreign bankers, especially Germans, who had credit and trading partners all over Europe. During the reign of Philip II, Genoese bankers succeeded in largely monopolizing the provision of credit to the Spanish crown.[12] They maintained their dominant position until 1626, when Portuguese bankers also started advancing money to the crown on a large scale. From the moment they negotiated their first *asientos*, the Portuguese were formidable competitors. They even replaced the Genoese temporarily as leaders in the field in the 1640s. Although the Genoese again provided the majority of loans from the 1650s onwards, the Portuguese were to remain prominent bankers for the Spanish crown until the end of Charles II's reign.[13]

In the late 1620s Yllán's star as a banker at the court of Madrid began to rise. He was not a member of one of the great established Lisbon merchant families such as the Tinocos, Fernández Camaragibes and Suárezes, nor did his marriage to Gracia Brandón de Amezquita open doors to the Lisbon merchant elite. Gracia came from a prominent family in Abrantes, near Portalegre, but she had no close ties to any of the main prestigious business dynasties in the Portuguese capital.[14] Yllán's business would flourish primarily thanks to its association with the Spanish crown.

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[12] See chapter 3.

[13] Boyajian 1983, pp. 17–41; Domínguez Ortiz 1983, pp. 121–133; Ebben 1996, pp. 11–26, 93–99 and 102–137; Israel 1985, pp. 110–112; Israel 2002, pp. 1–39; Sanz Ayán 1988, pp. 336–376; Studnicki-Gizbert 2003.

[14] AHN Inq. leg. 2084 no. 10, ff. 24–31; AHPM 4393, f. 341–342 Testamento de Doña Gracia Brandón de Amezquita, 3 February 1635; Denucé 1927. Gracia was Yllán's wife and his sister-in-law. Gonzalo Barraza Falcón, Yllán's older brother, was married to Gracia's sister Juana de Aguilar Rendón. SAAN 2436, ff. 74, 96–97.

In 1619 Yllán settled in Madrid, where he was initially engaged in financing trade with Spanish-America. His career as a financier of the Spanish-Habsburg monarch commenced in 1626. Unlike the large Lisbon dealers, he did not immediately start entering into *asientos*, international loans to fund Spanish military operations in Europe. He began by leasing the pepper monopoly in Castile, followed by the royal taxes on wool. It was only later in 1631 that his leasing operations would lead him to become involved in foreign financing.

In 1626 he was awarded the right to operate the pepper monopoly in Castile on the basis of his bid for the tender put out by the crown. Yllán's bid of twelve million *maravedís* a year beat those of his competitors.[15] Whether he was able to exploit the sole right to the sale of pepper in Castile for the full term of the six-year contract is debatable, however. Less than a month after the contract with Yllán had been signed, the Council of Finance received an offer of half a million more. What is in any event certain is that Yllán did not renew the contract for a second term; in 1632 two other Portuguese businessmen, Fernando Manuel and Francisco Méndez Correa, acquired the monopoly for 18.7 million *maravedís*.[16]

He had probably lost interest in continuing the pepper contract anyway, because he had meanwhile got his hands on what would prove to be the lucrative right to collect the duties on wool in Castile. Yllán administered these taxes, which were levied on the export of wool, from 1627 to 1630. Since he gained control of the wool duties in all the ports on both the north coast (*Derecho Nuevo de las rentas de las lanas*), and the south and east coasts of Castile (*Derecho Antiguo*) at the same time, he actually had a monopoly.[17] Yllán probably made a killing on his lease of the wool taxes.[18]

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[15] The Portuguese businessmen Manuel Ortiz and Ruy Díaz Angel had bid 1.7 million and 1.2 million *maravedís* less respectively. AGS Consejos y Juntas de Hacienda (CJH) 621.

[16] AGS CJH. leg. 621 consulta 24 May 1626, consulta 21 June 1626; Domínguez Ortiz 1983, p. 214.

[17] AGS CJH. leg. 452 consulta 22 April 1627; leg. 632; Tribunal Mayor de Cuentas (TMC) Renta de lanas leg. 816; Israel 1980, pp. 207–208; Rahn Philips 1980, p. 785.

[18] Yllán leased the duties on wool for a sum based on the meagre revenues of previous years, when royal officials had been responsible for administering them. During the term of his contract, exports of wool increased on both the north and east coasts of Spain. At least, it seems safe to draw this conclusion on the basis of the significantly higher price that Manuel Cortizos Villasante, Yllán's successor, paid. AGS 3a época leg. 529; AHPM 3.741, f. 917.

In February 1629, when Yllán still had control of the wool taxes, he made his first foreign loan. It was to be used to finance the relief of Bois-le-Duc ('s-Hertogenbosch), which was under siege by Dutch troops led by Prince Frederik Hendrik.[19] Holding the city was of immense strategic importance to the defense of the north of Brabant, so Yllán's financial aid came at just the right moment. His decision to take part in the Lisbon bankers' *asientos* was not unexpected, given his previous activities involving the pepper monopoly and the wool duties, for by leasing them he was in fact lending the crown money. He had to pay a deposit for the lease and deposit half of the lease price into the royal coffers every six months in advance. There is even a direct connection between the *asiento* and the wool tax lease, for Yllán was confronted with competing bids while his contract was still running. He probably made the offer of a loan in the Southern Netherlands to protect his contract from rival financiers.[20] Interim negotiations like this were common practice. Tax farmers not infrequently offered an advance on the proceeds of royal revenues in the form of a loan outside Castile.[21] The crown yielded to these sorts of offers, keen as it was to obtain credit abroad, particularly in the Southern Netherlands. In practice this meant that interested leaseholders with foreign financing capacity had a very strong competitive edge.[22]

The step makes even more sense when we consider that because of their deliveries of wool, the wool exporters had claims on their customers in cities such as Antwerp, Amsterdam, London and Hamburg, so they could draw bills of exchange on their northern trading partners. These bills were very appealing to Yllán because he could use them to transfer money to the Southern Netherlands. The Portuguese banker was consequently more than happy to let the wool exporters pay the duty they owed in bills of exchange drawn on Antwerp merchants.[23]

This notwithstanding, his decision cannot be explained solely by his activities as a leaseholder. There is also a clear link to his trading activities in the New World. The merchant saw good opportunities to strengthen and protect his trading interests in America by financ-

[19] AGS Contadurías Generales (CG) 123; CJH 656.

[20] AGS CJH 676 Consultas originales del Consejo de Hacienda, Madrid, 18 January 1631; CG 123, 124.

[21] Sanz Ayán 1987.

[22] In Yllán's case see CG 123, pliego 2, f. 5; 124, pliego 1, f. 2, condición 3, pliego 4, f. 13–17, condiciónes 22–25.

[23] AHPM. 3.741, f.f 923r–v, and 924.

ing the Spanish crown. We find evidence of this in what Yllán asked the king in return for the loans. His requests focused on legalizing his activities in the American trade and those of his partners, with whom he shared significant interests. In 1631, for instance, he attached a proviso to a loan of 55,000 *escudos* that Simón de Fonseca Piña, a close associate, should be granted the right to trade with the Spanish possessions in the New World.[24]

In 1634 García de Yllán made plans to expand his activities for the Spanish crown, and entered into negotiations with his agent in London, Juan de la Barra, about a very bold undertaking. King Philip IV and his first minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares, had been engaged for some time in fitting out a fleet to retake Pernambuco, which had been occupied by the Dutch. Yllán had suggested to de la Barra that they should come to the king's aid with two or three large, heavily-armed vessels of around 500 *toneladas*.[25] De la Barra would have to buy the ships in England, load them with munitions there and man them with British crews. The vessels would sail to Lisbon to pick up infantrymen and then set off for Brazil, where the Dutch had to be driven out of the occupied Portuguese territories. For this military assistance, the two merchants wanted the king to grant them, besides payment for the costs of the enterprise, the right to have the ships they supplied, loaded with colonial goods, sail back directly from Brazil to London. This would mean they could keep the costs down because they would not have to pay taxes in Lisbon.[26] The venture obviously had a very clear profit motive.

The plan put together by Yllán and his London agent reveals that the services he provided for the Spanish crown and his trading business dovetailed very neatly. He combined the activities with a view to exploiting his business opportunities to the full. He had probably done the same in previous cases. We can assume that he organized his enterprises in a more or less coordinated fashion. He geared his operations as a whole to one another, not so much weighing up the returns

[24] Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla (AGI) Contratación 569B, Cartas de Naturaleza, 22 May 1631; AGS CJH 664, 667.

[25] A *tonelada* was a measure of weight used to express the cargo capacity of ships in Andalucía and Latin America. A *tonelada* was the equivalent of 632.5 kg. Phillips 1992, appendix B. 228.

[26] AHN Inq. leg. 1878 no. 1, letter from Juan de la Barra to *licenciado* García de Yllán, 23 April 1634; Estado libro 966, f. 52.

and the expected costs of each individual activity, but rather with an eye to the overall income of his business.

In 1634 Yllán could look back on fifteen prosperous years since his arrival in the Spanish court capital on the Río Manzanares. He had built up successful business with Spanish America and made a name for himself as a leading merchant in this trade. Through his work administering royal taxes and, later, his loans to the crown, he had established contacts with royal agencies and laid the basis for a promising career at the court of the Spanish Habsburg monarch, Philip IV.[27] But fate had an unpleasant surprise in store for him. That same year the magistrates of the Inquisition decided to bring Yllán before the court because they suspected him of practicing the Jewish religion clandestinely.[28] Yllán, warned in the nick of time, made good his escape. He fled Madrid so precipitously that he had to leave his wife and children behind. It would seem that his burgeoning career had come to an abrupt and premature end. Amazingly, though, nothing could be further from the truth. After brief stays in Livorno and London, the Portuguese merchant settled in Antwerp.[29] Here Yllán's career underwent a dramatic revival. He continued his work for the king in the Southern Netherlands, where he actually became one of the most important mainstays of the Spanish regime. Yllán's activities on behalf of the king in the Southern Netherlands were an extension of his work in Spain. He was involved in financing the Spanish army and, as a corollary to this, also supplied goods, among them provisions, arms and gunpowder. Equally surprisingly, the Spanish authorities

[27] Yllán had become very rich and he lived up to his wealth. In Madrid he resided in Calle de Alcalá, one of the most prestigious streets in the city. He lived opposite the Church of the Knights of Calatrava in a series of connected buildings that he rented from the Marquis of Maenza. There were paintings worth hundreds of ducats and tapestries worth thousands hanging on the walls and he owned a magnificent collection of Indian curiosities valued at several thousand ducats. He also had a sedan chair and a carriage at his disposal. AHN Inq. leg. 1878 nr 1.

[28] AHN Inq. leg. 1878 nr 1; 1889 nr 1; 2084 nr 10 f. 97; 3684 nr 1 f. 1–25. An arrest warrant issued by the Inquisition tells us roughly what Yllán looked like, since it included a description of him. He was a man of average height; he had a black beard and a rather pale face. He had the appearance of a man of his age, in other words someone between forty and fifty years old.

[29] AHN Inq. leg. 3684 nr 1 ff. 7v–25r; libro 1115, f. 31r; SAA Processen Supplement 679, 681; Revah 1957, pp. 83–84.

evidently did not feel that the Inquisition's pursuit of Yllán was any reason for them to put an end to their association with him.

Why, though, did the Portuguese merchant not break all ties with the Spanish crown? Why, admittedly after some wanderings, did he eventually settle in Antwerp? An explanation for Yllán's actions may perhaps be found in testimony given to the Inquisitors in Madrid by a Jewish merchant from Amsterdam. Francisco Domingo de Guzmán, alias Samuel Aboab, was a Jew, originally from Jerusalem, who had lived in Amsterdam for years. In 1661 the man voluntarily reported to the Holy Office in Madrid, seeking to convert to Catholicism. He stated that while he was living in Amsterdam he had visited Yllán in Antwerp on business several times. So that he could continue to celebrate the Sabbath while he was in the city, he sometimes accompanied Yllán to the clandestine synagogue in the house of Simón Díaz Váez, a friend of theirs. During one of these visits, Yllán was alleged to have said in Francisco's presence that he would have preferred to go to Amsterdam so that he could be circumcised and live openly as a Jew. But to his great regret he had to confess that because of the huge debts the king owed him, he could neither leave the Spanish empire nor discontinue his services to the king.[30]

It is difficult to establish whether Yllán really did make this confession. But even if he did not express himself in those terms, the remark contains a grain of truth, for there are solid reasons for assuming that Yllán was indeed bound hand and foot to the Spanish empire. Some of the loans he had made had not yet been paid back, and, as well as repayment, he was entitled to interest on them. Just before he fled, Yllán had been awarded *juros* for the restitution of monies that had been lent, which entitled him to periodic payments from royal taxes. It was a matter of the utmost concern to Yllán to get these sums back.

For the rest of his life he pursued legal actions against the crown,[31] and particularly against the Holy Office, which had impounded his possessions in Castile and Aragon the moment he left Madrid.[32] Even

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[30] AHN Inq. leg. 2.084, f. 100; libro 1.127, f. 65; Kaplan 1981, pp. 201–204, Liberman 1935.

[31] AHN Inq. leg 2.084, nr 10 f. 95; 3.684, nr 1 f. 14; SAAN 2.438 f. 242; 2.468, ff. 297–298; 2.473, f. 333; 2.478, f. 641; 2.821, f. 101.

[32] AHN Inq. leg. 2.084, nr 10; libro 535, ff. 5r–25v; 537, ff. 296–304; cf. AGS 3a época 2.169 no. 6.

after his death, his heirs continued the Portuguese merchant's single-minded legal battle against the Inquisition.[33]

Since it was very much in Yllán's interests to continue his association with the king, he started to do business with the Spanish authorities in the Southern Netherlands.[34] The Spanish army was repeatedly, not to say constantly, short of money because the funds sent from Spain were inadequate. To cover the interim shortages, the army paymasters took out short-term loans with Flemish and foreign merchants in Antwerp until fresh funds reached them from Spain.[35] In 1638, a few months after his arrival in Antwerp, Yllán also made the paymaster a short-term loan, and it did not stop there. In the same year he advanced the Spanish army coffers a total of some forty thousand *escudos*. From then on the Portuguese merchant was an indispensable element of the financing of the Spanish regime in the Southern Netherlands. It was not only the paymasters and others in authority who availed themselves of Yllán's credit facilities, the governor did too.[36]

It is striking that the tasks the Portuguese merchant undertook for the king came together seamlessly, to such an extent that they were almost interwoven. While Yllán began by lending money to the army, the next step was to pay out money on behalf of his compatriots who had entered into *asientos* in Madrid. The two transactions were closely linked. When the time came to execute the payment order, Yllán paid out the sum owed less what he had advanced. He was not the only one; most of the merchants who paid out the monies sent from Spain (*mesadas*), lent the army short-term funds. What it boiled down to was that the merchants advanced money on the payments that they them-

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[33] AHN Inq. leg. 2.084, no. 10, ff. 27r–31v; AHPM 4.393, ff. 341r–342v Testamento de Doña Gracia Brandón de Amezquita, 3 February 1635.

[34] A crucial factor in this was that, although the Southern Netherlands had come under the rule of the Spanish king after the death of Archduke Albert in 1621, these territories remained outside the sphere of influence of the Spanish Inquisition unlike the Spanish crown's Italian and American possessions. Yllán could therefore continue his business dealings with the Spanish monarchy without fear of the Inquisitors. Contreras Contreras/Dedieu 1980; Revah 1963; Thomas 1990.

[35] Italian, Portuguese and Flemish merchants were in the habit of advancing the army bridging loans at a rate of 0.5–1.5% a month. In 1626 the *pagador general* alone had borrowed 448,164 *escudos* from Portuguese merchants. SAA Insolvente Boedelkamer (SAAIB) 1937–1938; AGS CMC 3a época leg. 975, ff. 177–178; leg. 1438; leg. 1762 pliegos 1–7. Pohl 1972, pp. 669–673.

[36] Loans to Don Manuel de Castel Rodrigo: SAAN 2.436, ff. 22, 29v; 2.438, f. 242; loans to the *pagaduría*: SAAN 2.436, f. 22; 2.437, f.509; 2.438, f.119.

selves had to make on the instructions of the *asentistas* (Portuguese and Genoese bankers). By combining the periodic payments with the granting of advances, the merchants were able to make very healthy profits.

In 1641 García de Yllán expanded his activities in the service of the Spanish regime by assuming responsibility for provisioning the Spanish troops. He signed a contract undertaking to supply the daily bread ration to all the Spanish soldiers quartered in forts and fortified places, and in the citadels of the Dutch towns. He was also responsible for supplying provisions to the troops in the field. As *proveedor general* Yllán had to provide the soldiers with 750 grams of bread a day for a fixed price. The bread had to be made from one-third rye and two-thirds wheat flour. Predecessors had sometimes played fast and loose with this rule. In 1631, for instance, the provisioner had so adulterated the bread that troops who ate it died. An investigation revealed that as well as rotten meat and other ingredients that most definitely do not belong in bread, it also contained plaster.[37]

Supplying the Spanish army was a large-scale operation and one that had to be flexible to cope with unexpected attacks and troop movements. Within a very short space of time Yllán developed a tightly-knit network of suppliers stretching from Venlo to Saint-Omer in Artois (now in northern France) and from Sluis in the Dutch province of Zeeland to Luxembourg. The organization was founded on businessmen who provisioned the local garrisons and the mobile troops. A small number of agents managed the regional coordination of the supply operations. Yllán himself was the general director of the enterprise.

Why did Yllán take on this job? Expectations of making a profit were obviously a factor, but he had other motives too. The bread supplies were directly related to his financial dealings with the Spanish authorities. On the instructions of *asentistas* in Madrid, García de Yllán regularly paid sums of money into the coffers of the Spanish army in Brussels. To do this he dipped into his own purse or, if he wanted to spread the risk, turned to brokers on the Antwerp stock exchange. This was how most of the merchants involved in financing the Spanish regime in the Southern Netherlands conducted their business. In consequence there was considerable pressure on the Antwerp

[37] SAAN 2.432, f. 9; 2.467, f. 2; Parker 1972, pp. 163–164.

money market. To add to this, credit was granted on the basis of the silver that the *asentistas* sent from Spain. However, it often arrived only after long delays and not in the expected amounts. This shortage of cash increased the strain on the already frequently overheated money market.[38]

Yllán managed to circumvent this problem. Because he supplied the troops' rations on credit, he had claims against the Spanish army treasury. He took these into account when he had to make the payments into the army coffers for the Madrilenian bankers. All in all, what it came down to was that the Portuguese merchant made his payments to the army exchequer in kind, not cash.

As well as bread, the merchant also supplied the Spanish forces in the Netherlands and on the Iberian Peninsula with munitions, fuses and gunpowder. The Spanish army high command placed regular orders with Yllán because he delivered sound goods at competitive prices. His clients were so pleased with his services that over the years he acquired a reputation as a reliable armaments dealer. As he did with the bread supplies, Yllán endeavored to make the most of the opportunity to substitute deliveries in kind for cash payments to the army's coffers. It should be noted here that Yllán was not the only supplier of arms and, his good reputation and contacts with the Spanish authorities notwithstanding, he had to work hard to bring in the orders.

As Yllán extended his activities for the crown, he did less and less business that was not connected with this work. He withdrew from the American trade and became involved in the art market. This trade was linked to his activities for the Spanish crown and was an integral part of his business. He was drawn into the trade by the demand for art from the Netherlands that existed among the Spanish rulers, aristocracy and statesmen. Ever since the late Middle Ages, the Spanish had been interested in Netherlandish painting, tapestries, religious statues, prints, maps and books. The Spanish rulers were major players in the market for paintings and tapestries in particular. Isabella and Joanna of Castile, Charles V, Philip II, Philip III and Philip IV were all important collectors of paintings from the Low Countries. The Spanish Habsburgs amassed an exceptional collection of tapes-

[38] Baetens 1976, vol. 1, pp. 243–259; Boyajian 1983, pp. 79–83; Pohl 1972, pp. 669–673.

tries designed and woven in workshops in Brussels, Oudenaarde and Antwerp. And it was not only monarchs who were in the market—in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, members of the aristocracy, church leaders and wealthy citizens in Spain were also keen to get their hands on the art of Flanders and Brabant. Netherlandish paintings were so sought after in Spain that dealers shipped them to the south by the boatload. Artists from the Low Countries actually went to the Iberian Peninsula and settled there for long periods, or even permanently, to produce art for the local markets.[39]

After the Iconoclasm in 1566 and the Calvinist assumption of power in Antwerp, the center of the art trade with Spain, in 1577, the art market went into crisis. The situation was at its worst in the 1590s. At the beginning of the seventeenth century Antwerp's trade and industry underwent a general revival without, however, regaining its former key position in international traffic in the Netherlands. There were new opportunities, too, for trade and industry in other cities and regions in the Spanish Netherlands. The peace that the Twelve Years' Truce brought to the Low Countries, the demand from the archducal court in Brussels which stimulated trade, and the new opportunities for export to Spain meant that painting and tapestry also staged a recovery in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Peter Paul Rubens's visit to the court of Philip III and, even more importantly, his stay in the Madrid of Philip IV, were of inestimable value to the growth of painting and tapestry in Antwerp in particular and the Southern Netherlands in general. From August 1628 to April 1629 the painter and diplomat stayed in Philip IV's Real Alcázar, where he had his own studio. The king, whose 5,500 or so works made him one of the largest, if not the largest collector of paintings of his day, greatly admired the work of Rubens and his compatriots and did much to promote it.[40] Flemish paintings predominated in the works purchased by Philip IV. Or, at least in the collection in the Real Alcázar, one of the king's largest, there were more works from the Southern Netherlands than Spanish and Italian paintings put together. Canvases by Rubens accounted for a considerable proportion of these.[41]

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[39] Alvarez 1999; Checa Cremades/Sáenz de Miera 1994; Marchi/Miegroet 1999; Vermeylen 2003, p. 82.

[40] Burke 1997, vol. 1, pp. 124–125; Cherry 1997, vol. 1, pp. 2–6 and 12–13; Vergara 1999, pp. 6–18, 57 ff.

[41] Burke 1997, vol. 1, p. 125.

The king was not alone in this; others at the court and elsewhere shared his predilection for the art of the Southern Netherlands. The Spanish demand for Flemish and Brabant art was so great that it actually had an influence on the development of the characteristic visual culture of this art. Spanish import regulations aimed at keeping out paintings from the Northern Netherlands may even have contributed to a difference between the pictorial idioms in the painting of the Northern and Southern Netherlands.[42]

The work of Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens and other artists in Rubens's circle also provided a new stimulus for the weaving industry. They designed cartoons for tapestries with favorite Counter Reformational subjects such as the 'Triumph of the Eucharist' and the 'Triumph of the Church', which were very popular with the archducal court in Brussels, the royal court in Madrid, the Spanish nobility and religious bodies. Biblical subjects such as the 'Life of David' and themes from the classics such as the 'Life of Achilles' and the history of the Roman consul Decius Mus were also sought after by wealthy buyers. The Southern Netherlandish trade in tapestries was concentrated in Antwerp because of the greater freedom dealers enjoyed there compared with their colleagues in other towns and cities in Brabant and Flanders.[43]

In what type of art did Yllán deal and how did he become involved in the trade? The business relationship he entered into with the Spanish ambassador plenipotentiary Don Gaspar de Bracamonte, Count of Peñaranda, and members of his retinue in Antwerp can serve as an illustration of Yllán's involvement in the Antwerp art trade. Between 1645 and 1648, acting on behalf of the King of Spain, Don Gaspar led the peace negotiations in Münster with the envoys of the Republic and the King of France. In 1648 he reached agreement with the members of the States General, but he failed to agree on terms with the French.[44] He stayed in Antwerp both on his trip from Spain to Westphalia and on the return journey after his mission, and while they were there he and other members of the delegation purchased works of art.

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[42] Marchi/Miegroet 1999, pp. 92–94.

[43] Delmarcel 1999, pp. 255–256; Duverger 1981; Göbel 1923, pp. 447–448; Herrero Carretero 2003.

[44] Castel, 1956, pp. 29–30; Rohrschneider 2007, pp. 97–102, 108 ff., 140 and 148–149; Stradling 1988, pp. 261 and 266–267.

Peñaranda ordered four works featuring animals and fruit from the animal and still life painter Frans Snijders. Don Gil de Navarrete, who was a member of the delegation, purchased eight small canvases of fruit, game and other animals and four large paintings of hunting scenes and game, also painted by Frans Snijders.[45] This Antwerp-born artist had become famous in Spain thanks to a series of ten paintings of tales from Aesop's fables that the States General in Brussels had commissioned from him in 1634 for the influential Spanish statesman, the Marquis of Leganés.[46] From then on Snijders's work was highly sought after by rich and powerful Spaniards. The Cardinal Infante Ferdinand of Austria, the king's brother and governor general of the Spanish Netherlands (1634–1641), visited his studio twice, and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm had work by him in his art gallery. The king, too, valued the work of Frans Snijders.[47]

Peñaranda bought the four works by Frans Snijders through the intermediary and art dealer Jacques de Paris. Yllán was approached to advance the funding for the purchase. He paid 100 guilders for each work. He also organized the shipment of the works of art newly acquired by Peñaranda and Don Gil de Navarrete, getting them sent from Antwerp via Zeeland to Amsterdam and from there by sea to Spain.[48] It is not clear whether Peñaranda and Navarrete purchased the works for their own collections. Peñaranda is known to have been an art lover who built up a sizable collection of paintings, but Snijders's canvases do not appear in his inventory. He may have been acting for Philip IV or another, or he may have presented them as gifts, quite possibly to the king, who owned a considerable number of works by Snijders.[49]

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[45] SAAN 2.437, f. 188; SAAIB 1929 III f. 42.

[46] Brown/Elliott 1980, p. 116 and n.39; Koslow 1995, pp. 22 and 24.

[47] In 1636 Frans Snijders received, through Rubens, a commission of Philip IV to paint sixty animal pieces for the decorative program of the Torre de la Parada, a hunting lodge in the grounds of El Prado palace to the northwest of Madrid. The project was unique in its kind. Never before had so many animal paintings been ordered to decorate the rooms of one building. Later (1639) the king commissioned another eighteen hunting scenes for the Real Alcázar in Madrid; these were done by Rubens and Snijders working together. Snijders belonged to a network of highly specialized painters that included Jan Breughel the Younger, Hendrik van Balen, Sebastiaen Vrancx, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, David Teniers and Jacob Jordaens. Alpers 1971, pp. 29–41; Brown/Elliott 1980, pp. 194–195; Koslow 1995, pp. 23–26; Raup 1999, pp. 66–76; Vergara 1999, pp. 124–130.

[48] SAAN 2.437, f. 188; SAAIB, f. 1928; III f. 36; 1929 III f. 42.

[49] Burke/Cherry 1997, vol. 1, pp. 138–139 and 878–891.

As well as paintings, the two envoys also bought tapestries in the Southern Netherlands, and Yllán was involved as the middleman between buyer and weaver and as the financier and shipper. In the early 1640s Yllán was already doing business with the Brussels tapestry weaver François van den Hecke. This eminent artist and businessman was dean of the Brussels weavers' guild and supplier to the archducal court. Among other things, Isabella ordered tapestries from his workshops for the Poor Clares convent of Las Descalzas in Madrid. Van den Hecke had a very large workshop where tapestries in numerous patterns and very diverse, typically Baroque, religious, historical, mythological and allegorical scenes were made. His clientele was wealthy and politically influential, particularly in Habsburg Europe.[50]

Acting for prominent Spaniards, Yllán ordered made-to-measure tapestries from van den Hecke, both individual pieces and whole series on a specific theme.[51] For instance, he bought a wall hanging for a Spanish dignitary and in the same year ordered a series of eight Brussels tapestries on the 'Histoire du Centre de l'Amour'.[52] The following year he commissioned the master weaver to make a set of tapestries depicting the 'Story of Ulysses' and another of the 'Story of David'.[53] In 1650 van den Hecke received an order from Yllán for a complete 'chambre de tapisserie de huit pièces' on the theme of the 'Histoire de la Vie de l'Homme'.[54]

In essence, Yllán's role was that of intermediary between the weaver van den Hecke and the Spanish client. Yllán placed the order and advanced van den Hecke part of the agreed price before production began. He paid the outstanding amount when the piece was delivered. If the order was for a set of tapestries, Yllán likewise put down a deposit, and then paid the balance for each tapestry in the set as it was delivered.[55] It is not clear whether the merchant banker received the commissions directly from the Spanish nobles and dignitaries or whether there was someone else operating between him and the client. To pay for works of art, the Spanish customers used the services of the

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[50] Duverger 1981, pp. 221–225; Göbel 1923, I, pp. 355–358; Herrero Carretero 2003, pp. 166–167.
[51] Pohl 1977, p. 189.
[52] SAAN 2.432, f. 98; 2.467, f. 138v.
[53] SAAN 2.467, f. 138v.
[54] SAAN 2.439, f. 240.
[55] Delmarcel 1999, p. 214; Göbel 1923, vol. 1, pp. 336–338; Pohl 1977, pp. 130–136 and 139.

Portuguese and Genoese bankers who were involved in financing the Spanish crown's military operations in the Netherlands. For instance, Portuguese *asentistas* in Madrid and Seville called on Yllán to pay for the purchases made by Don Gaspar de Bracamonte and Don Gil de Navarrete and the expenses they incurred.[56] Yllán's financial operations thus became entangled with the trade in art. To keep his clients happy, he expanded his range of services. He acted in and financed their purchases of paintings and tapestries in Southern Netherlandish markets and he also arranged the transport of their spoils for his clients.[57]

García de Yllán did this work because he saw a chance to make a profit, but there is no doubt that he was also concerned about safeguarding the continuity of his business. In fact, Yllán added to the services he provided in order to satisfy the art-loving interests of the crown and of the representatives of Spanish power in the Netherlands. His motive was not so much to gain immediate returns as to secure the Spaniards' interest in his services and strengthen his competitive position. To this end, he made the best possible use of the contacts and means at his disposal.

In view of Yllán's international contacts and his work for the Spanish crown, it was almost inevitable that Don Antonio Pimentel de Prado, the Spanish envoy in Stockholm, should immediately think of the Portuguese merchant when Christina of Sweden was seeking a personal banker in the Southern Netherlands. Pimentel had got to know Yllán in his capacity of provisioner to the Spanish army while he was carrying out his military duties in Brussels. In 1653 the Spanish diplomat wrote to the governor, Leopold Wilhelm, and to Philip IV asking them to recognize Yllán as the Swedish queen's resident.[58] The king granted the request on 13 May 1654.[59] The diplomatic status this conferred on him would certainly not have been unwelcome. It gave him exemption from taxes on the import of particular foreign goods and commodities, and this helped strengthen his competitive

[56] SAAIB 1928 II 47, 79; 1928 III 2, 36.
[57] SAAN 2.437, f 188; 2.479, f 511.
[58] Lanoye 2001, pp. 101–102.
[59] AGS leg. 2364, ff. 63, 64 and 99; ARAB Geheime Raad, Spaans tijdperk, 313; Denucé 1927, p. 31.

position.[60] His most important task for the queen was to manage her finances. Yllán received money out of the revenues from her Swedish dominions through her representative in Hamburg, Diogo Texeira de Sampayo, but this was not enough to cover the expenses of the great state in which she lived in the Netherlands and so she often had to call on Yllán's financial resources. During the months she spent in the Low Countries he advanced her credit totaling 45,000 *rijksdaalders*—or at least so it would seem, for in the accommodation she had to reach with Yllán's heirs before her departure for Rome on 22 September 1655 (he had died shortly before) she undertook to pay this sum.[61]

The wealthy Portuguese merchant also took charge of part of Christina's impressive art collection. The many paintings, several fine sets of tapestries and quantities of silver and porcelain were shipped from Sweden to Ostend, from where they were transported to Antwerp in crates and taken to Yllán's house in Lange Nieuwstraat. The collection attracted a great deal of interest. Among the visitors was Jacob Jordaens, who seized the opportunity to paint copies of a number of works by Italian masters. During her stay, Christina continued to build up her collection, adding another twenty or thirty paintings, including some portraits of her by Justus van Egmont and a flower still life by Daniel Seghers. It is not clear from Yllán's accounts which paintings she acquired as gifts and which she purchased herself, but there is no doubt that she spent substantial sums of money on these and other works of art.[62] In the light of her own inadequate financial means, the Portuguese merchant must have had to advance all or part of the money for these acquisitions. We do not know whether Yllán was also involved as an intermediary in the acquisition of these paintings, but this is by no means unlikely because Flemish artists were frequent guests in his mansion. What is more, he and other Portuguese dealers in his circle were in the habit of buying tapestries, paintings and statues from artists and workshops both for clients and to decorate their own homes.[63]

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[60] SAAN 2.478, ff. 92v and 95v; SAAPK 587, f. 107v.

[61] Israel 1985, pp. 92 and 138; Israel 2002, p. 230; Kellenbenz 1966, pp. 187–198; Kellenbenz 1985, pp. 387–388; Lanoye 2001, pp. 99–119.

[62] Lanoye 2001, pp. 112–114.

[63] The Antwerp Portuguese had significantly more dealings in tapestries than in paintings and sculptures. Pohl 1977, pp. 136, 186–189, 195–196, 212–213 and 322–323.

This suspicion is strengthened by the close involvement of Yllán and his son Fernando de Yllán, who succeeded his father as the Swedish queen's resident, in the sale of part of her collection. The queen was besieged by creditors while she was staying in Antwerp and Brussels. When she announced her departure for Rome, they became increasingly impatient and pressing, fearful as they were that they would not see much of their money back, or at least only after a long delay. The queen was compelled to sell parts of her art collection in order to address her financial problems, but she saved her paintings by realizing the value of her silver, library, jewelry and tapestries in all sorts of ways. For instance, Yllán had her jewels pawned in Amsterdam for 10,000 *rijksdaalders* through a Portuguese agent there, who was a friend of his. Pearls were disposed of and silver was sold, melted down or minted into coins as a means of coming up with cash. When Christina left the Spanish Netherlands she left the greater part of her collection behind in Yllán's house in Antwerp as collateral for the arrangements she had made with her creditors. Fernando de Yllán was made responsible for the property and for settling the debts. More of the silver and jewels went, and she pawned almost all her valuable tapestries for around 27,000 *rijksdaalders*.[64] Her collection of paintings escaped a similar fate, with the exception of one painting by Rubens which she sold to Yllán for 1,000 guilders. He organized this as a paper transaction by deducting what he owed from her outstanding debt to him.

García de Yllán must have been an important art collector in his own right. He had revealed a sincere interest in art while he was still in Madrid. His house in Calle de Alcalá was sumptuously decorated with paintings, tapestries and Indian curios. When the officials of the Inquisition compiled an inventory of Yllán's goods and chattels as part of the seizure of his property, they found valuable furniture and draperies, paintings to a total value of 4,708 *reales* and tapestries worth 24,400 *reales*. They valued the merchant's superb collection of Indian curios at 8,200 *reales*.[65]

Once in the Netherlands, he again surrounded himself with art. He commissioned pieces from Southern Netherlandish workshops to decorate his own houses in Antwerp and Brussels and his castle

[64] SAAN 2.444, f. 302; 2.479, ff. 270–279v and 511; Denucé 1932, pp. 176–192; Duverger 1993, I-7, pp. 222–230.

[65] AHN Inq. Leg. 1878 no.1; AHPM 4393, ff. 341–342: Testamento de Doña Gracia Brandón de Amezquita, 3 February 1635. See also note 24.

in Bornival. The palatial mansion in Lange Nieuwstraat in Antwerp, magnificent on the outside, must have been equally splendid when one passed through its doors. Three storeys high, it had two spacious courtyards with arcades and beautiful gardens. Even now, despite the rebuilding it has undergone over the centuries and its current use as a school, the building has a stately air. The first courtyard and its magnificent gate, still exactly as they were in the seventeenth century, are particularly fine. The interior with its spacious rooms must have harmonized perfectly with the majestic exterior. The decoration of the building must have been truly impressive. We do not know what the building looked like inside before Christina of Sweden moved in; all we have is a description of it as it was when she was staying there.[66] There is no doubt, though, that Yllán had decorated his house with paintings and tapestries.[67] He was so well off that he commissioned pieces from the weavers for himself as well as for his clients. Two of the rooms in his mansion were decorated with sets of tapestries from van den Hecke's Brussels workshops depicting the lives of Ulysses and David.[68] Bornival Castle near Nijvel, which he bought in 1652, is described as splendid, and a worthy royal residence. Christina certainly had no objections to staying there in August 1654.[69]

Yllán's association with the king had a cumulative effect and led to a fusing of their interests from which the merchant could no longer easily extricate himself. He embarked on his career in the service of the king as a leaseholder of taxes, a position that inevitably made him an international creditor. The success of Yllán's international enterprise was based predominantly on his worldwide network of contacts with Sephardic and other traders and the good relations he had established with the Spanish authorities. The opportunities and potential profits

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[66] Burenstam 1885; National Library (The Hague) microfiche 4979; Burenstam 1891, pp. 9 and 12; Denucé 1927, pp. 33–36; Pohl 1977, pp. 322–323.

[67] There is no known inventory of Yllán's household goods in Antwerp, Brussels or Bornival, but one was compiled of the property of his daughter Mencia de Yllán (1626–1698) who had married her cousin in Antwerp. She lived in Hobokenstraat, in a much more modest house than her father's. She owned tapestries, Indian curios, Chinese lacquer cabinets and paintings, including a 'Contrefijtsel van de Coninginne van Sweden' (a portrait of the Queen of Sweden). SAAN 2.821, f. 151; 3.746, f. 185–206v; SAAIB 1930; SAA Parochieregisters 211, 219. Duverger 2002, I-12, p. 456–458; Pohl 1977, pp. 189 and 322–323.

[68] SAAN 2.468, f 309.

[69] Cantillon 1777, vol. 2, p. 38; Lanoye 2001, p. 171.

that the king's large-scale enterprise offered him resulted in the merging of his trading activities and financial operations with the Spanish monarchy. The supply of goods to the Spanish army in the Netherlands, among them provisions, arms and gunpowder, was closely linked to the financing of the Spanish crown. The object was the continuity of his operations. In fact, Yllán expanded the range of services he provided in order to meet the particular requirements of the crown and of the people who exercised Spanish authority in the Netherlands. Yllán's involvement in the art trade was a logical consequence of the way his business had become inextricably linked with the enterprises of the Spanish crown. Over the years, the organization, orientation and scope of the firm had been geared to accommodating the specific needs of the King of Spain. In order to continue to meet his client's requirements, he constantly adapted the large-scale, well-balanced range of services his organization provided. Yllán's involvement in the art trade was also a logical consequence of the interweaving of his business with the Spanish king's enterprises. Trade in art was simply an extension of this policy.

García de Yllán Barraza's life and business do not stand in isolation. There are specific and unmistakable differences between the enterprises of other Portuguese (Jewish) traders and his career and activities for the Spanish crown and the Swedish queen, but there are also inescapable similarities to the businesses of others like him in the king's service—men such as Manuel Cortizos Villasante, Francisco López Franco y Feo and Fernando de Montesinos Téllez. Yllán is a typical example of a rich Portuguese merchant who worked with the Spanish crown and whose business dealings became inextricably involved with royal policy.[70] There is plenty of evidence to suggest that other merchant houses with different backgrounds, involved in different services for the crown, went through a similar cumulative process in which the trade in art became a supplementary or complementary part of their businesses. There are, moreover, no indications that the experiences of traders working with the regime when Philip IV was on the

[70] Boyajian 1983, pp. 17–41, 103–132; Ebben 1996, pp. 24–25; Pohl 1977, pp. 194–196; Sanz Ayán 2006. This is not to say that there were no merchants who succeeded in freeing themselves from their association with the king. Diogo Texeira de Sampayo's sensational departure from Antwerp in 1646 is a prime example—although that breach was not permanent either.

throne were very different from those of merchants working for other European rulers.[71]

Yllán's association with Christina of Sweden was based on his wide network of business contacts and on his good relations with the Spanish crown. He started to perform his services for the queen at the express request of the Spanish ambassador in Stockholm, Don Antonio Pimentel de Prado, and with the permission of the governor general, Archduke Leopold Wilhelm and King Philip IV himself, who believed he could make political capital out of Christina's conversion to the Catholic faith.[72]

Philip, however, was an ungrateful client. In 1653, through the good offices of Christina of Sweden and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, Yllán petitioned the king with a request that he be elevated to the ranks of the nobility. It was with exactly this in mind that, a year earlier, he had bought the delightful estate of Bornival and restored the castle there to its former glory. The recommendations of Christina and Leopold Wilhelm notwithstanding, the king refused Yllán's request.[73] He was probably not in a position to do anything else, because the Spanish Inquisition had reopened the old case against Yllán. On the basis of new evidence, they condemned him to death in his absence because he was allegedly a Jew. On 30 November 1653, during an *auto de fé* in Granada, the sentence was symbolically carried out and an effigy of García de Yllán was burned at the stake.[74]

[71] Arnheim 1966; Cools 2006; Israel 1985, pp. 123–144; Israel 2002, p. 230; Kellenbenz 1985, pp. 387–388; Marchi/Miegroet 1999, pp. 94–97; Sanz Ayán 1988, pp. 316–335 and 377–430; Swetschinski/Schönduve 1988, pp. 47–57.

[72] Lanoye 2001, pp. 26–30, 50–51, 101–118 and 168.

[73] AGS Estado leg. 2.364 f. 63–64, 99; ARAB Secretary of State and War, 255, f. 140; 259, f. 6; 303, f. 178; SAAN 2475, f. 388; Lasso de la Vega 1940–1941, pp. 76–77.

[74] AHN Inq. leg. 3684 nr 1: Proceso contra García de Yllán.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PRETEXT OF PICTURES: ARTISTS AS CULTURAL AND POLITICAL AGENTS

Marika Keblusek

On 15 November 1979, the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher publicly exposed Sir Anthony Blunt, one of Britain's most famous scholars, writers and teachers on the history of art, as a Russian spy. Born in 1907, Blunt could look back upon an imposing and varied career as curator of the British Royal Collections; as renowned connoisseur of the work of Nicholas Poussin; as former Director of the Courtauld Institute and as Fellow of the British Academy. Furthermore, he had faithfully—as was thought—served his home country during World War II and had even been recruited for MI5, the British Secret Service. Now, Blunt's double life was finally uncovered. Although he had already admitted his espionage activities to government officials in exchange for immunity in the 1960s, the public denouncement of his activities as a spy for the Russians brought shock waves upon the nation, and it would eventually cost him his title.[1]

Anthony Blunt's double life in the juxtaposed worlds of glamorous art and shady politics may have been merely a coincidence, yet it is interesting to consider to what extent his activities in the one world contributed to, and even promoted, his success in the other. Did his very public and reputable life as art advisor to the queen serve as the perfect cover for his political sympathies and activities? Or was he approached because of his outstanding prospects in the British upper class milieu, which would bring him into close contact with political leaders and royalty in the near future?

Although it may seem a long stretch between the twentieth-century world of Blunt and the early modern period, these questions are equally crucial when we consider the many figures in the Renaissance and early modern worlds of art who, like Anthony Blunt, also engaged

[1] On Blunt see Carter 2001. A fictional account in Banville 1997.

in political, diplomatic activities—more often than not of an informal, even secretive nature. We have to look more closely at the many painters, calligraphers, goldsmiths, musicians, poets and other artists who acted as (secret) political intermediaries for their respective masters and patrons. As such, they are the counterparts of the diplomats and political intermediaries who doubled as cultural agents, and who have been discussed in other chapters in this volume. While political representatives were commissioned by their patrons to acquire cultural products such as books, paintings and curiosities, artists were enlisted as agents (sometimes even as spies) communicating political intelligence; as such, they played a distinctive role in the international politics of their time. However, in some individual cases, for instance those of famous artists such as Peter Paul Rubens or Hans Holbein, biographers have occasionally pointed out their political activities, presenting these men as sensational exceptions to the rule rather than recognizing the common underlying agency patterns.[2]

In this chapter, we will address these issues by focusing on the roles of artists as *political agents*—as diplomatic envoys and distributors of news, and as informers and spies. Did their artistic careers perhaps provide them with the right channels and networks for political enterprises? Did their status as artist allow them, for example, a freedom of movement essential to secret missions and assignments?

The involvement of artists in the cultural policies of their patrons can be seen as a first step towards their role as brokers and intermediaries. As cultural advisers and art dealers, they played an active role in the formation of collections and the development of taste and connoisseurship. Around 1619, the calligrapher and miniaturist Balthazar Gerbier was appointed as the main agent responsible for the collections of George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham. He was trusted not only with their organization and upkeep, but with all new purchases as well, ranging from exotic curiosities and books to antique statuary, medals and paintings.[3] Although Buckingham realized very well the political impact of a great art collection, he was by no means a connoisseur himself, and therefore employed the artistically experienced Gerbier to buy anything that might add prestige to his cabinets

[2] Lamster 2009; Lescourret 1993; Wilson 1996.
[3] Keblusek 2003, pp. 73–82 and literature there cited.

and galleries.[4] In 1621, for example, Gerbier was given a blank check to scout and purchase paintings in Italy, the financial and logistical details of which were handled by the Dutch-Venetian merchant Daniel Nijs at his request.[5] The painter Daniel Mijtens famously portrayed Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, and his wife in their art galleries. Yet his artistic service to the Arundel collections also included several purchases on the Amsterdam art market, where he acquired paintings by Holbein and Raphael, books and 'Cabinet wood'. As Arundel's art agent in Amsterdam, Mijtens probably attended the auction of the art collection of painter Jan Basse in March 1637, where, according to Mijtens in a letter to Edmund Walker, there 'was great store of printes and drawings'.[6]

Painters and artistic advisers officially employed by a court thus often doubled as art brokers, negotiating deals between other artists and the sovereign, evaluating works of art and purchasing new acquisitions. Hans von Aachen and Joseph Heintz the Elder, both formally connected to the Prague court of Emperor Rudolf II as court painters, undertook several trips to scout new artists and works of art. In 1597, von Aachen traveled to Besançon to buy art from the estate of Cardinal Antoine Perronet de Granvelle, which was transported to Prague three years later under Von Aachen's supervision. During his extensive travels in Italy, he arranged for several portrait commissions depicting potential consorts for Rudolf II. His artistic background here clearly was used in a diplomatic context.[7] Von Aachen's colleague Joseph Heintz the Elder was sent by Rudolf to Italy in order to study and draw antique statues, and to explore the Roman art market.[8] Other agents employed by the Rudolfian court included the emperor's official 'Antiquarius', Jacopo Strada (1515–1588), whose knowledge and connoisseurship was apparent from his own collections. He resigned from Rudolf's court in 1579 and described his talents to a possible future employer as two-fold: he could be active as an 'artist' himself, designing gardens and buildings, or he could be of assistance in the construction of the patron's art gallery and library. Sometimes his

[4] Howarth 1985 and 2006.
[5] See also chapter 2. For Nijs, see chapter 8 and literature there cited.
[6] Kuile 1969, p. 6 and documents XXXIII (8 February 1637) and XXXIV (12 March 1637). For the auction: Montias 2002, pp. 24–25; 175–176 and 213–214.
[7] Jacoby 2000, pp. 45–46. For other examples of 'visual diplomacy', see chapter 1.
[8] Zimmer 1971, pp. 16–7.

services as information broker crossed over into the political domain.[9] In Milan, the poet and scholar Prospero Visconti offered his services to William V, Duke of Bavaria in November 1569 by way of sending him an antique statue and an accompanying letter, advertising his artistic knowledge and willingness to act as 'humble agent'. Acting as ducal art agent from then on, Visconti provided William V with paintings, luxury products, antique gems, armory, curiosities, crystal, exotic animals and plants.[10] Although Visconti did not earn a fixed salary for his intermediary activities as Strada did, the duke occasionally sent him horses and valuable gifts by way of 'payment' in return.[11]

The secondary function of artists as cultural advisers to their patrons seems to have been more rule than exception; a 'natural' practice which was of course not limited to the sixteenth century. David Loggan (1634–1692), a Scotsman born in Gdańsk, first studied locally with the engraver Willem Hondius, then went on to Amsterdam as an apprentice to Chrispijn de Passe and finally, in 1675, settled in London. He earned his money by advising his aristocratic patrons—most notably Sir Thomas Isham—on what artworks to buy.[12] At the Medici court, the painter Niccollò Cassana (1659–1714) doubled as art adviser and broker for Prince Ferdinando from 1688 onwards, while the painter and collector Benedetto Luti (1666–1724) served Grand Duke Cosimo III as a guide on the Roman art market.[13] Similarly, musicians with a court appointment could be asked to go beyond their regular duties and supply their patron with instruments, music and even other players.[14]

Thus, artists of all kinds were valued not only for their artistic output, but also for their knowledge of the art world in general. They possessed the necessary contacts, means and channels through which cultural information and products could be negotiated and transferred. As was the case with political agents whose networks were also availed

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[9] Jansen 1982, p. 58. On Strada see further Busch 1963, Jansen 1987 and Lietzman 1997.

[10] The letters of Visconti and his cousin Gasparo Visconti are published in Simonsfeld 1902. Letter of Prospero Visconti recommending his services on p. 244 (27 November 1569).

[11] Simonsfeld 1902, p. 502, compares Visconti's position in this respect to that of Philipp Hainhofer (see chapter 5 of this volume).

[12] Isham 1963.

[13] Chiarini 1974 (Cassana); Bowron 2002 (Luti).

[14] See chapter 10.

of for cultural purposes (as we saw earlier), those of artists were likewise adapted to political practices. There are numerous examples of painters, sculptors, architects, poets and musicians who doubled as political representatives, informers, and even spies.[15] Studies on the intellectual life of Renaissance artists have shown to what extent sculptors and painters were involved in the public political domain: some were active as magistrates, others executed high offices in the local guilds.[16] It has been suggested that these men may have seen these appointments as a step up the social ladder, or as a strategic means to procure bigger assignments. Activities on local or professional governmental level brought them into close(r) contact with the political elite, *i.e.* their prospective patrons. Artists who were employed formally as court painter or court musician, for example, were often enlisted to execute other assignments as well. Keeping up-to-date with cultural developments and contacts elsewhere was the most obvious.[17] Soon enough, instructions with a diplomatic aspect followed; as we have seen, artists were often sent as visual reporters on embassies and missions. In 1427, Jean Bapteur traveled three months as an envoyé through Italy on behalf of the Savoyan court.[18] While busy with his art work in Rome for Francesco Gonzaga in 1488, Andrea Mantegna used the opportunity to execute diplomatic orders from his patron as well.[19] According to Giorgio Vasari, Mantegna received his noble title not just as a reward, but to facilitate the diplomatic process by elevating the artist's social status.[20]

Because of his residence away from his patron, Mantegna was able to act as his representative. Similarly, city governments chose local artists with an appointment at a specific court to look after their interests, sometimes even in an official capacity.[21] The French painter and architect Jean Perréal had shown his political talents while he was in England during the marriage negotiations between Louis XII and Mary Tudor. In 1520, he was elected to represent the city of Lyon

[15] See the introduction of this volume and chapters 10 and 11. See also Bély 1990, pp. 333–334; Brantl 1998.
[16] Ames-Lewis 2000.
[17] Cole 1995, pp. 36 and 41.
[18] See his biography on www.groveart.com.
[19] Ames-Lewis 2000, p. 66.
[20] Cole 1995, p. 39.
[21] Warnke 1985, pp. 102–103.

at the French king's court in Paris.[22] The musician Petrus Alamire was sent as a diplomat-spy to inform the Burgundian-Habsburg court on the affairs of Frederick, Duke of Saxony.[23] As the unofficial agent for the Republic of Geneva, Jean Bordier, a miniaturist from Switzerland, dispatched his political letters with gossip and news from the French court.[24] In Florence, silversmith Jacques Bylivelt was highly valued by the Medici court; his familiarity and trust with the Grand Duke resulted in a series of political assignments ranging from the active gathering of news and information to other tasks 'in affari di Stato'.[25] The Dutch printmaker Simon Frisius (*c*.1570/75–1628) had gained quite a reputation for his engraving of calligraphy (a talent he shared with the artist-diplomat Michel le Blon) and was engaged in several publishing projects. From 1620 on, he focused mostly on his career as a commercial-political agent for Duke Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar.[26] Another skilled engraver-calligrapher, Balthazar Gerbier, has already been mentioned several times as cultural adviser to the Duke of Buckingham (Fig. 4); later in his career, he was appointed official resident of King Charles I in Brussels.[27] As we will see, Gerbier closely cooperated with other artist-agents, including painters Michel le Blon (Fig. 11) and Peter Paul Rubens, the royal musician Nicolas Lanier and the miniaturist Edward Norgate (*c*.1580–1650). Norgate, a miniature painter, like Gerbier, was employed by the Earl of Arundel, yet also acted as a political agent for King James VI/I and Charles I respectively, dispatching letters to foreign courts.[28]

Quite often, these diplomatic travels and purposes were shrouded in mystery, and seemed to hint at secret missions and intrigues. For example, it is still unknown—despite heavy speculation—what the 'secret trips' entailed which Jan van Eyck undertook on behalf of Philips the Good of Burgundy in 1426 and 1427.[29] However careful we should be

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[22] Lebel 1948, pp. 267–268.

[23] Schreurs 1999. For other musicians see chapter 10.

[24] Stroehlin 1905, pp. 102–39. See also Lightbown 1968 and 1970.

[25] Fock 1975.

[26] Orenstein 2008. Welcker 1936 on Frisius' activities for Weimar.

[27] On Gerbier: Betcherman 1961 and 1970; Keblusek 2003 and literature there cited.

[28] For his career as a miniaturist: Norgate 1997.

[29] A fictional account in Sinoué 2000. See also Duverger 1977, pp. 175–176: 'It is possible that the journey [*i.e.* in 1436] was not unconnected with cartography and that van Eyck had actually been commissioned to map certain coasts and the position of

in labeling these activities as 'espionage', in some cases that characterization is certainly applicable, such as when detailed intelligence on military operations or state secrets was concerned.[30] Between 1620 and 1625, the painter Pieter Isaacsz acted as official commissioner in the Sound for the Dutch States General and negotiated with King Christian IV on a number of political issues; he was paid a yearly salary of 800 guilders for his troubles. However, as recent research has shown, he secretly sold this classified information to the Swedish Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, and he did so explicitly using his artistic endeavors as a cover.[31]

Using art as a cover for political machinations was a longstanding phenomenon.[32] Already in 1461, Matteo de' Pasti embarked on a diplomatic journey to Constantinople, ostensibly to paint the portrait of Sultan Mehmed II, but he was captured by officials who did not believe his artistic 'excuse'. In contrast, the 1685 secret mission of artist and theorist Roger de Piles on behalf of the Marquis de Louvois in Germany and Austria was completed without disruptions; de Piles satisfactorily explained his presence by pretending he was visiting major art collections to purchase art works for King Louis XIV.[33]

Even the most well known artist-diplomat of the early modern period, Peter Paul Rubens, often conveniently masked his political undertakings with an artistic front. Rubens' diplomatic career, which spanned from 1625 to 1635, has long been overlooked by historians. Only recently has it become the focus of new research, which shows the painter was not sought out to become a diplomat for the Infanta, but instead actively pursued this role himself from *c.*1620 on, driven, at

towns. In 1456 Bartolomo Fazio claimed that van Eyck had painted a circular world map for his master, on which not only were the major towns and geographical phenomena marked, but also the means of calculating the relative distances between them. It is a remarkable coincidence that in 1444 Master Guillaum Hobit, 'astronomyen', delivered a world map, based on the Ptolemaic system, to Duke Philip'. Duverger notes a possible connection with the '1440 purchases by van Eyck', without specifying those. For the payment of Van Eyck's 'voyaiges secrets', see Laborde 1849–1852, vol. 1, pp. 225, 242, 251 and 350.

[30] See also chapter 11. Warnke 1985, p. 104. In the fifteenth century Marcello and Agostino Fogolino acted as spies for Venice in Trent: Burke 1974, p. 83.

[31] Noldus 2007; Roding/Stompé 1997, p. 62. See also chapter 9.

[32] However, as a phenomenon it has not been systematically studied as yet: Burke 2008.

[33] For Pasti: www.groveart.com. De Piles: Mirot 1924, pp. 49–50.

least partly, by social ambitions.[34] To this end he exploited his artistic contacts such as his friend Balthazar Gerbier, who was instrumental in arranging contact between the painter and the Duke of Buckingham. In later years, Gerbier brokered the purchase of Rubens' large art collection and paintings on behalf of his patron.

Between 1625 and 1627, Gerbier and Rubens met several times to discuss possible ways of easing the political tensions between England and Spain. In the summer of 1627, they arranged a meeting in Holland to talk again about furthering an alliance between the two nations. The English ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton explained to the English Secretary of State how Rubens had arranged his travels: 'Rubens having an absolute and ample passport to come into these United Provinces with his servants and bagage, [this] was obtayned under pretence of a treaty betwixt him and Gerbier about pictures and other rarityes'.[35] Even though the two agents did as a matter of fact frequently discuss the purchase of works of art, their 'pretence' was always remarked upon in letters by Carleton and others. 'Rubens is come hether, under pretence of commerce of pictures with Gerbier', Carleton would write; in another case he had heard that the artist had been spotted with 'Gerbier in his company walking from towne to towne upon theyr pretence of pictures'.[36] Abate Alessandro Cesare Scaglia, envoy of Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, reported that 'Rubens, the famous painter (…) has finally arrived in these provinces, under the pretext of negotiating with Gerbier, Buckingham's favorite, the sale of statues and paintings at a price of 200,000 francs'.[37] Carleton believed the Dutch authorities would quickly learn about Rubens' true purpose, for 'they [*i.e.* the Dutch] believe of this man as of other whome they style Emissaryes, who upon severall pretences are sent into these Countreyes to espye the actions of state and raise rumour among the people'.[38]

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[34] See Auwers 2010 and 2006–2007. Lamster 2009 is a general account, based on existing literature, notably Gachard 1877, which has long been the only extensive study on the subject.

[35] Sainsbury 1859, pp. 86–87: Carleton to Lord Conway, The Hague, 3 July 1627.

[36] Sainsbury 1859, p. 90: Carleton to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, The Hague, 15 July 1627; p. 91: Carleton to Conway, The Hague, 15 July 1627.

[37] Gachard 1877, p. 61: Abbé Scaglia to Charles-Emmanuel, The Hague, 26 July 1627 (my translation). On the political career of Scaglia: Osborne 2002.

[38] Sainsbury 1859, p. 91: Carleton to Conway, The Hague 15 July 1627 (spelling modernized).

That the business of art was one of those pretenses is evident. Yet the question remains whether the trade in works of art, the execution of a portrait, or the inspection of a famous gallery was just a convenient excuse for agents with an artistic background, or whether this points to a more fundamental connection. Were these men consciously sought out just because artistic activities had in the past proven to lend a credible cover to secret missions? To be more specific: did Gerbier and Rubens choose the pretext of painting because they were artists, or did their success as political agents largely depend on the fact that they could plausibly exploit their professional background? Were they more suited to be (secret) agents *because* they were artists? The following does suggest that this may indeed have been the case.

In July 1635, Rubens tried to obtain a passport from the Brussels authorities enabling him to travel to the Dutch Republic, where, he claimed, he was to inspect a shipment of Italian paintings in Amsterdam.[39] In reality, he was to open peace negotiations with the Dutch on behalf of Spain. His plans were thwarted by the French ambassador in The Hague, who did not trust Rubens. Referring to the recent French-Dutch treaty precluding any negotiations between Spain and the Republic, he implored the States General to refuse the issue of a pass. In October 1635 the Venetian ambassador again reported that Rubens intended to travel to England 'with some paintings' via the Dutch Republic; however, everyone suspected 'that he wants to come to discuss peace (…) and they also believe that when he has successfully brokered a treaty, he will travel on to England to discuss the Palatine cause'.[40] In the end, the mission came to naught. In a letter to Michel le Blon, Rubens explained why his plans had fallen through:

> Concerning my trip to Holland, I have done as they have advised you. But the States made great difficulties in allowing me a pass, telling me the decision should come from the States General, and many other lies, which have caused me, sadly, to give up.[41]

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[39] Gachard 1877, p. 258: Antoine Triest, Archbishop of Ghent, to Don Martin de Axpe, Secretary of State, 11 August 1635 (the original on pp. 341–342).

[40] Gachard 1877, p. 259: Francesco Michiel, 18 October 1635.

[41] Riksarkivet Stockholm (RAS), Extranea 60, VI Holland. Avisor: 'Copije van heer Rubens brief aen mij geschreven uijt Antwerpen den 8 decem. 1635', Rubens aan le Blon, 8 December 1635: 'Aangaende mijnne Comste in holland, had ick uijt Last versocht gelijck men ue g'advisert hadde, Maer de heere Staeten maecten so grooten Diffigulteijt om mij een pasport t'accorderen, seggende dat de resolutie moste comen

This aborted attempt in effect signaled the end of Rubens' diplomatic career, but, at least at first, not of the secret peace negotiations between Spain and the Republic. These were taken over by others from September 1635, until they were finally abandoned in February 1636.[42] Although talks continued between Sweden, France, Denmark, England and Emperor Ferdinand in the years to come, not much is known about peace negotiations between Spain and Holland in 1637.[43] In these secret goings on, yet another painter took central stage as a secret agent.

A series of letters from Gerbier to the English Secretary of State, dating from March and April 1637, testify to the clandestine discussions between Spain and the Dutch on the possibility of a treaty. Apparently the negotiations were to be such a matter of discretion that Gerbier used cipher code to obscure the paragraphs in question.[44] In his first letter on the subject, dated 14 March 1637, he reported that the Spanish diplomat Francisco de Galaretta had received letters from Holland formulating conditions for peace; the 'painter Aertsfelt' was preparing to travel back to the Republic with Galaretta's answer. Gerbier had tried to interrogate Aertsfelt about the contents of the treaty, and had been told in confidence that the Dutch would have to promise not to open a military offensive. The Prince of Orange had given explicit orders that the treaty should be kept *sub rosa*, because any leaks might severely damage his position and reputation in the Republic.

Although Gerbier's subsequent reports reveal that it was not 'Aertsfelt' who in the end took Galaretta's letter to Holland, the choice of, once again, a painter as a possible secret go-between is telling. 'Aertsfelt' referred to the Flemish artist Andries van Eertvelt (1590–1652), an influential and respected painter of seascapes, who had worked for some time in Italy and had returned to his native city of Antwerp in 1630.[45] Most likely the 'Negotiant Painter'—as Gerbier

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vande Staten generael & veele dergelijcke impertinentien, dat het mij verdrooten heeft voorder te vervolgen' Compare Rubens to Peiresc, 16 March 1636 in Saunders Magurn 1991, p. 402 (no. 238).

[42] For a survey of these events: Israel 1982; Lesaffer 1994.

[43] Lesaffer 1994, p. 192.

[44] NASP 105/13 (letterbook Gerbier, April 1636–April 1637): Gerbier to Coke, 14 March 1637; 21 March 1637; 28 March 1637; 11 April 1637; 18 April 1637. These letters, in cipher code, also in NASP 77/27, ff. 91, 93, 101, 112–113 and 124.

[45] On Eertvelt: www.groveart.com. A laudatory poem in Bie 1971. See also Brantl 1998, 293–299.

strikingly labeled him—was engaged because of his professional background, which gave him a plausible cover for his operations. Eertvelt's presence in Brussels was sufficiently explained by his interest in some paintings, and was also used by Gerbier as the cover for the intended trip north. A letter to Constantijn Huygens, secretary to the Prince of Orange which Eertvelt carried, was said to contain news 'about pictures'. Obviously, Gerbier himself was quick to utilize the artistic excuse. After Eertvelt had had a meeting in Antwerp with Spanish representatives, Gerbier invited the painter and his wife to dinner in his country house 'on pretence to have of his pictures'. Two weeks later an invitation was issued again, this time for an extended stay, which, according to Gerbier, could be easily explained: 'I will put him on some picture to serve for pretext of his abode'.

Whether Andries van Eertvelt was active as a secret agent on other occasions as well should be the focus of further research. Gerbier's almost casual use of the epithet 'Negotiant Painter' seems to suggest Eertvelt had gained quite a reputation in this respect. At the same time, the term points to an 'established' practice, an obvious connection between political wheeling and dealing, and the art world. Artists apparently were ideal candidates to act in the grey regions of the political arena, since their artistic work credibly required frequent travels, mobility, and close contact with members of the court and government. The cover of art was in fact so credible that it was also used by others: in 1637, for example, the Cardinal-Infant Ferdinand masked his travels through the Spanish Netherlands (intended for a political campaign) as a series of visits to the studios of famous Flemish masters.[46]

Mobility, international networks, services to the court and government—these characteristics do not, of course, exclusively belong to artists. As we have seen in the previous chapters, other professional groups, such as merchants or scholars, can be profiled as ideal agents because they can boast the same talents and traits.[47] So why were artists, as it certainly seems, so often sought out for diplomatic assignments? Why were they favored as gatherers of (secret) information?

Vasari suggested that the ennoblement of Andrea Mantegna in 1488 was a means of easing the diplomatic process, for which aristocratic

[46] NASP 77/27, f. 124v: Gerbier to Coke, 18 April 1637.
[47] See Keblusek 2006 for a 'profile' of the early modern agent.

status was a precondition: official negotiations could only take place between representatives with a similar hierarchical position. This is certainly true for *official*, formal diplomacy in the early modern period, but as many historians have shown, *informal* contacts were as valuable—and arguably even more so—in the political reality of the day. What mattered was not just access to the court, but particular access to the sovereign's innermost circles.[48] Knowledge about art was one of the most effective currencies with which to procure that access, even when one was not, perhaps, a member of the aristocracy or court elite. Close proximity to the king—of the kind enjoyed by court musicians, painters, and entertainers—could forge a relationship based on trust and lead to all possible career opportunities.[49]

Thus, when Michel le Blon was warmly welcomed into the royal apartments by King Charles I himself, it came as no surprise to the agent. Some courtiers, highly alarmed by le Blon's easy penetration of the court's invisible boundaries, looked down upon him, wondering out loud whether Chancellor Oxenstierna had not been able to send a better-suited, aristocratic envoy. Meanwhile, le Blon 'had been welcomed by the king and several courtiers of the highest level'.[50] This, the agent himself deduced, should be credited to his *artistic* background—his expertise, his contacts with fellow artists, and his love of art:

> They say I shall not be allowed to enter the King's gallery as I please, which is a room next to his Bedchamber, where his Majesty usually takes a walk, and where I easily and intimately talk with him about the beautiful things [there]. Which freedom, as far as I know, no one of the agents or anyone else has enjoyed.

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[48] Starkey 1987, p. 5.

[49] Ashbee 1997, p. 188.

[50] RAS, Enskilda Arkiv, Oxenstierna samlingen, E645: Le Blon to Spierinck, 6 April 1635: 'Wat ick voorder ver*s*taen ver*s*taen [*sic*] te hebben, dat men mijne persoon alhier te hove disputeren, gelijc men heer Johans ambas*s*ade gedaen heeft, en als off zijn rxel. niemanden anders herwaerts te senden hadde gehadt. dat mag heijmelijcken geschieden, bij Sir Vain en sijne Creaturen, die eene bittere Vijand is van alle des Rijchscantzelers dienaers, maer bij den Coninc, ende verscheijde vande grootste ben ick tot dato seer wellecom geweest, &de heb te hove teerste woord daervan te hooren. Ick mocht soo gedisputert worden, men soude mij geen vrijicheijt gegeven hebben indes conings galderije te coomen alst mij belieft, dewelcke een plaets is nevens zijn bed caemer, alwaer zijne Ma. deurgaens spatzeren gaet, &de met wie ick van deselve fraeijicheden famillarisere. Welcke vrijicheijt noch niemand van d'agenten off andere ver*g*unt is geweest, mijns wetens'.

In a later letter to his patron Oxenstierna, le Blon repeated that a shared passion for art had allowed him intimate access to King Charles: 'His Majesty knows me as a connoisseur of his dearest Pictura, which makes me very agreeable to him and subsequently to all gentlemen in his company'.[51]

Talking about pictures did lead to talks about other things; it could be a genuine start of a discussion or a pretext for a conversation about politics.[52] The language of art, as confirmed by le Blon's observations, was a 'familiar' language; indeed, a shared speech which allowed for easy access and informal proximity to those that mattered politically.

[51] RAS, Enskilda Arkiv, Oxenstierna samlingen, E645: Le Blon to Oxenstierna, 23 April 1638: 'soo kent mij Ihr Ma.t voor een kender an sijn liefste pictura, waer deur ick hem seer aengenaem ben, en dien volgende gesien bij alle de heeren van sijn geselschap'.

[52] The pro-French Venetian ambassador was anxious when Rubens arrived in London in 1629: 'I do not know if the king may see him, but he may under the pretence of picture, in which he delights greatly'. Quoted in Brotton 2006, p. 148.

CHAPTER NINE

A SPIDER IN ITS WEB: AGENT AND ARTIST MICHEL LE BLON AND HIS NORTHERN EUROPEAN NETWORK

Badeloch Vera Noldus

In the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm, scattered throughout the private archives of merchants, generals and politicians, are hundreds of letters written in a small, neat hand, signed 'Your Humble Servant, Michel le Blon'. From Amsterdam, where he lived, Michel le Blon (1587–1656) reported on the political situation, on diplomatic events and on the world of the arts. Trained as an engraver and goldsmith, later in life he was able to legitimately describe himself as an art dealer, purveyor of diplomatic intelligence, political representative and informant. Living in an age when international reporting was still in its infancy, he was presented with ample opportunities which he exploited to the full—although not always without problems, as we shall learn (Fig. 11).

We focus in this essay on the artist and agent Michel le Blon, his background, his methods and his patrons. As a dealer in news and art in the service of Swedish clients, le Blon occupied a position between the Dutch and Swedish markets. We shall consequently also examine le Blon's influence on collections in Sweden, the networks he used and the way he arranged for them to benefit from one another. We will explore these questions with the aid of correspondence between Michel le Blon and his most important Swedish patrons—Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, Queen Christina and General Carl Gustaf Wrangel. The letters to Oxenstierna date from 1632 onwards, while the correspondence with Christina and Wrangel took place in 1650 and 1651–1652 respectively. The previously unpublished correspondence with Wrangel also contains unique 'ego documents' by the marine artists Willem van de Velde the Elder and Simon de Vlieger. Le Blon's activities will be set against those of other agents who, like him, dealt in both information and cultural artifacts. Their ranks include the Dutch painter Pieter Isaacsz and the playwright Theodoor Rodenburg. And we shall end by asking this question: did the fact that he was an artist make le Blon the ideal agent?

Michel le Blon was the oldest son of Ursula Sandrart and Christoffel (also known as Corneille) le Blon of Valenciennes in the Southern Netherlands. Michel's maternal grandparents had emigrated from Bergen in the Flemish province of Henegouwen, to Frankfurt-am-Main in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Christoffel le Blon had settled in Frankfurt in 1576, as had many other émigrés from the Southern Netherlands. When Michel was in his early twenties he moved from Frankfurt to Amsterdam, which was undergoing a period of unprecedented development. The population grew rapidly in a very short space of time; in 1585 the city numbered 30,000 inhabitants, but by 1632 it housed 120,000 people, making it the largest city in the Northern Netherlands.[1] This growth was largely caused by the fall of Antwerp in 1585, brought about by the blockade of the Scheldt by Spanish forces. Amsterdam more or less automatically assumed Antwerp's role as the foremost center of trade in Northern Europe. The city developed into a flourishing staple port brimming with opportunities that attracted immigrants in large numbers. Many of them came from the Southern Netherlands, which they had fled for religious and economic reasons. In the first instance, however, many Flemings did not go north, choosing rather to establish themselves in England and in the German cities of Cologne, Bremen and Frankfurt, as the le Blon family had done.[2] But from the 1590s onwards there was a noticeable shift towards the Republic, particularly Amsterdam, where the future began to look extraordinarily promising. The southerners, in turn, contributed to the progress and prosperity of the Republic in general and Amsterdam in particular. Among them were many merchants, intellectuals and artists, men such as Michel le Blon and, later, his cousin Joachim von Sandrart. Sandrart (1606–1688), painter and author of the *Teutsche Academie der Bau-, Bildhauer- und Mahler-Kunst* (1675), was to follow le Blon's lead in 1620 and move from Frankfurt to the Republic. In the late 1620s von Sandrart and le Blon went to Italy together. In 1637 Sandrart returned to the Netherlands, this time accompanied by the painter Matthäus Merian the Younger, brother-in-law of le Blon's brother Christoffel. The Merian and le Blon families knew one another from Frankfurt am Main.

[1] Kuijpers 2005, p. 9.
[2] Or, as in the case of Daniel Nijs, in Venice: see chapter 6.

We do not know exactly when Michel le Blon set himself up in Amsterdam, but he was certainly there in 1610. In that year he engraved his first Dutch design, the front of Jan van Ghelen's pamphlet *De opstandinghe van Mars*.[3] In 1611 le Blon published 'une suite de 14 feuilles d'ornements'—fourteen plates of ornaments for goldsmiths—under the title *Zomige eenvoldige vruchten en spitsen voor d'ancomen: kunst liefhebbende ieucht*. He was now established as a goldsmith and engraver at the sign of *De Vergulde Wijnpers* on Singel and later, after his marriage to Margriet Houtman Maartensdr. of Gouda in 1615, on the Verwersgracht.[4] In the 1630s the family, of whom only the sons Cornelis and Johannes survived to adulthood, lived on a property at number 226 Keizersgracht, between the Westermarkt and Reestraat, from where le Blon wrote his intelligence reports.[5] When Joachim von Sandrart came to live in the city in 1637, le Blon arranged for him to live a few doors down at number 236 Keizersgracht. In Amsterdam le Blon swiftly made contact with artists and literary figures and became part of the group that surrounded the poet Pieter Cornelis Hooft, later known as the Muiden Circle after Hooft's castle of Muiderslot where they sometimes met (the group was not known by that name at the time). This circle included, in addition to the writers Hooft and Gerbrand Bredero, the poets Constantijn Huygens (secretary to the stadholder) and Joost van den Vondel, and the composer Jan Sweelinck. Its members met regularly. Le Blon, moreover, belonged to ''t Wit Lavendel', a rhetoric society for Flemish immigrants with which Vondel was also affiliated.[6] These contacts brought him an extensive network among Amsterdam's cultural elite and generated plenty of commissions, for example designs for coats of arms, plaques and frontispieces for books of poetry and prose. He also designed models for brooches, buckles, dagger hilts and the like. The engraver Weyert Claes, his brother-in-law on his wife's side, was another very valuable contact in this respect.

No one has yet written a full biography of le Blon, although in recent decades he has featured in various articles and studies that looked at

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[3] Ghelen 1610; Kellen 1900, p. 2.

[4] Stadsarchief Amsterdam (SA), notice of the intended marriage between Michel le Blon [Michiel le Blond] and Margriet Houtman [Grietgen Martens te Goude], 1615.

[5] Eeghen 1970, p. 98.

[6] As claimed by Fontaine Verwey 1969a, p. 110. However, le Blon's membership is mentioned neither in Hummelen 1982 nor in Boheemen/Heijden 1999.

his different activities as an artist and in the field of diplomacy.[7] His role as a cultural figure in Amsterdam was described by Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, while Karl Steneberg explored le Blon's significance to Swedish art history. Paul Sellin treated le Blon's period as Swedish envoy in England. In her unpublished dissertation *Art and diplomacy in Northern European Protestant courts of the early seventeenth century* (1998), Mary Brantl was the first to specifically examine the interweaving of political and artistic activities that is so typical of le Blon, and of the many other diplomats *cum* art advisers who appear in her thesis. The present essay should therefore be regarded as an addition to this indispensible but nonetheless limited literature on le Blon; its aim is to recognize that le Blon's artistic activities were closely connected to his task as a gatherer and provider of political news. His work as an artist and his art dealing business would provide him with an entrée for his second career—a career that commenced, at least officially, in 1632.

It was the influential Swedish chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654, chancellor from 1612) who recruited le Blon into the service of Sweden in 1632. From then on, until the chancellor's death, le Blon wrote him numerous letters in which politics and art often fused. Oxenstierna contracted agents to gather news for him throughout Europe, thus assuring a regular and up-to-date supply of political and diplomatic intelligence which he received in the shape of newsletters, pamphlets, maps and books. From 1628 on, the moment Sweden became actively involved in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), collecting the latest news from European centres of trade and politics was extremely important to Sweden's rulers. In the early 1630s, however, Oxenstierna did not have a permanent contact in Amsterdam, then undisputedly a centre of world trade, until he contracted Michel le Blon. We might ask ourselves how the chancellor came into contact with the artist, with whom he signed an agreement in 1632, and why he should have chosen le Blon and not an experienced diplomat. In the first place it must be said that in 1632 the rest of Europe was watching the Sweden of King Gustav II Adolf very closely. The king, with phenomenal strategic skill, led his country in victory after victory in German territory until his death on 6 November 1632 at the Battle of Lützen. It was clear to everyone that they were dealing with the up-

[7] Brantl 1998; Granberg 1929; Fontaine Verwey 1969a; Fontaine Verwey 1971; Keblusek 2003; Lamoen 1986; Sellin 1997–1999; Steneberg 1955.

and-coming major power of the Baltic, and this generated international interest in the empire, which was de facto ruled by Axel Oxenstierna after Gustav II Adolf's death. Sweden was a magnet for merchants, traders, diplomats and artists trying their luck. Although we cannot be certain, it would seem likely that it was Michel le Blon who contacted Oxenstierna, not the other way round. The chancellor may then have sounded out Jacob van Dijck, his former ambassador in The Hague.[8] Van Dijck often welcomed artists and poets to his 'Swedish house' in The Hague and must have known—or at least known of—le Blon through a shared acquaintance, the poet Joost van den Vondel.[9] If this was the case, van Dijck evidently felt he could recommend him, since on 25 May 1632 le Blon signed the *Geacordeerde conditien tuschen haer exelentien den heer Rijchskantseler Oxenstiern ende Michel le Blon*.[10] The contract stipulated, among other things, that le Blon would gather information, possibly of a confidential nature, that could be relevant to Sweden: 'All mischance aside, I have resolved, in the service of his Royal Majesty and the Crown of Sweden at the pleasure of his Excellency my lord Chancellor, in as far as is possible and practical, to devote all my efforts and attention to persuading persons of different positions in sundry services and places to provide accurate reports and intelligence'. The contract also laid down le Blon's annual salary and his *per diem* traveling expenses: 'Furthermore, when I travel I shall have three Rixdollars a day for traveling expenses and one thousand Rixdollars a year, commencing on the 25/15 May 1632, as evidenced by the permit granted and given to me by his Excellency'. Should the work involve additional expenses, for instance if an informant had to be bribed, those costs would also be reimbursed: 'Likewise I shall also be paid for all unusual and extraordinary expenses that I might incur to gain information from someone, to obtain copies of important documents, for postage for letters and other such items'.[11]

Remarkably, Michel le Blon had described himself as an 'Agent of Sweden' long before he signed this agreement with Oxenstierna. He

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[8] Fontaine Verwey 1969a, pp. 110–11; Keblusek 2003.

[9] Schutte 1983, pp. 485–87. Van Dijck had had an office in Gothenburg since 1621 but returned regularly to The Hague where he kept his house, sublet to Ludvig Camerarius, until 1629. He died in December 1631.

[10] 'Conditions agreed between His Excellency Chancellor Oxenstiern and Michel le Blon'. RAS, Enskilda Arkiv, Oxenstierna samlingen, E645: Michel le Blon to Axel Oxenstierna, 25 May 1632.

[11] For a detailed account of le Blon's news business with Sweden: Keblusek 2003.

used this phrase in the first edition of his *Wapenboeck*, a collection of sample coats of arms he engraved. This edition is undated, but his *Nieu wapenboeck*—printed, like the first, by I. C. Visscher—appeared in 1627.[12] This indicates that there must already have been preliminary contacts, possibly even as early as 1618, the year Sweden approached the States General requesting a loan of a million daalders. This was the sum that Sweden had to pay after its defeat in the Kalmar War with Denmark (1611–1613). The loan to Sweden was funded by a syndicate of merchants who acquired a monopoly on the Swedish copper trade in return. This, of course, gave the Amsterdam copper staple a tremendous boost. It is possible that Le Blon was already acting unofficially as an intermediary between the Amsterdam merchants and the Swedish state and that the contact was not put on to a formal footing until years later, in 1632. Whatever the case, the letters from le Blon to Oxenstierna that we have date from after 1632, the year the contract was drawn up and he was given a wider range of tasks. An examination of the correspondence reveals that le Blon was very good at 'persuading persons of different positions in sundry services and places to provide accurate reports and intelligence', as the contract puts it. It also makes it quite clear why one of the most powerful politicians of his day hired Michel le Blon, an artist and hence not the most obvious choice for a job as an agent. Le Blon had an extraordinarily widespread network, and it was this that made him such an effective agent. He had good, reliable contacts who kept him informed of news from foreign courts and hotbeds of intrigue as well as domestic news. He copied the letters sent to him by his correspondents into his own letters to Oxenstierna, or simply folded them up and enclosed them. 'Domestic' news came from Amsterdam and The Hague, sometimes reported by Dirck Graswinckel, who worked as court clerk to the States General. Information also came in regularly from Brussels, Paris and Antwerp, written in 1644 by le Blon's friend, the playwright and diplomat Theodoor Rodenburg. He also provided reports from Cologne (1636, sent to him by Thomas Bilderbeec), Berlin (1636), Lübeck and Hamburg (July 1649, compiled by le Blon himself), Portugal (1641, Antonius de Jonsa de Maçedo), Moscow (1643, Thomas van Swaen) and Madrid (1643). A 'Mr. Jan Luc' reported from London, as did Dirck Graswinckel in 1635 and 1636, and le Blon himself supplied

[12] Kellen 1900, pl. 134–141, pl. 142–153.

news from England when he spent time there as the Swedish envoy in 1638, 1640, 1642 and 1650.[13]

Le Blon wrote Oxenstierna dozens of letters during his time as a Swedish agent. They contained political and diplomatic intelligence, trade news ('nine wealthy vessels from the East Indies have now arrived in these parts; their cargoes are listed opposite') and military information ('List of the English Naval Fleet fitted out this year, 1638'). Le Blon's records of his expenditure on postage reveal that he sent two or three letters a week, sometimes accompanied by a package.[14]

Once his appointment had been made official, le Blon was given other commissions, this time cultural ones, in addition to his work as a political agent. Oxenstierna asked him to buy paintings, sculptures and books for him, so le Blon went to see artists in their workshops, visited booksellers and attended auctions on his patron's behalf. The chancellor approached le Blon with these requests because he knew him as a 'connoisseur' (*Liebhaber*) of painting and acknowledged that he was well versed in these matters.[15] Throughout his career Michel le Blon worked very closely with Peter Spierinck (*c.*1595–1652) on assignments of this kind. Appointed by Oxenstierna in 1626, Spierinck was also in Swedish service as the Dutch resident in The Hague, which made him le Blon's superior.[16] Unlike le Blon, Spierinck was not a trained artist, but he was the son of the renowned tapestry weaver François Spiering and hence very familiar with the art world. As a representative of the family business he worked in the art trade and, like le Blon, he was an art collector.[17] Tasks were sometimes delegated and contacts taken over. Le Blon did not always find it easy to get

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[13] On Le Blon and England, see Sellin 1997, pp. 102–25; 1998, pp. 53–84; 1999, pp. 102–32.

[14] RAS, Extranea, vol. 60; Extranea II, vols. 9, 10, and 11; see also Keblusek 2003.

[15] RAS, Det odelade kansliet Riksregistraturet, 3 April 1641, 210, ff. 90ff. See also Steneberg 1955, p. 60. The full quotation reads: 'Sonsten weil man hiesiges orths mimt Conterfaictern und andern Schildereijen oder Mahlwerken etwas beginnet curios zue werden, undt also ein gutes Subjectum so sich auff conterfaicten undt andere Mahlwercke mit perspectiv undt sonsten wohl verstehet, gerne haben möchte, So wolle der Herr unbeschwerdt, weil Ich weiss, dass Er ein Liebhaber diesser Kunst undt sich darauff wohl verstehet, sich umb eine in solcher Kunst wohl erfahrne gute Persohn selbiger Orthen umb thue, undt mit deroselben accordire, dass Sie sich hieher ins Reich begeben wollte, Es soll dieselbe alhier deregestallt accordiret werden, dass Sie verhoffentlich damit wohl content und zuefrieden sein woll'.

[16] On Peter Spierinck: Noldus 2006a.

[17] On art collecting in the Dutch Republic: Bergvelt/Kistemaker 1992. Spierinck's collection is discussed in Veen 1992a.

along with him, as we learn from a letter he wrote to Oxenstierna, complaining about the way Spierinck treated him: 'he [Spierinck] does not hesitate to cause me all the misery he can think of whenever he can'.[18] All the same, they had perforce to work together and, thanks to a widespread network of artists, dealers, auctioneers and the like, they were able to meet every request relating to the arts that they received from Sweden.

Some of Michel le Blon's contacts appear in various capacities in his local and international networks. Thomas Bilderbeec, for instance, reported from The Hague, where the stadholder's court resided and the States General met, but on several occasions he also sent news from abroad. The same was true of the notary and clerk Dirck Graswinckel. As a diplomat, Peter Paul Rubens, with whom le Blon kept up a regular correspondence, was a source of political and diplomatic information, while as an artist he could assist le Blon in obtaining items his Swedish principals wanted. Theodoor Rodenburg, who sometimes wore his poet's hat and at other times that of the diplomat, was a similar multi-functional contact. Acquaintances like this in his network of contacts enabled le Blon to satisfy his clients' demand for news. As well as commissioning him to write newsletters, these principals gave le Blon other instructions, as Oxenstierna did in 1641 when he asked le Blon to find a suitable portrait painter for a post in Sweden.[19] This eventually proved to be David Beck, a pupil of Anthony van Dyck, who was a personal friend of le Blon's.[20] Beck accepted the post and settled in Stockholm in 1647. Three years later he painted a magnificent portrait of Oxenstierna.[21] Queen Christina, who sat for Beck a year later, took it with her when she left Sweden in 1654, but it has since returned and is now in a private collection. Beck's portrait of Oxenstierna contributed in no small measure to the familiar image of the austere chancellor labeled by history as a statesman who eschewed luxury. This image is based in part on the comparison often drawn between him and his

[18] RAS, Oxenstierna samlingen, E 645, Le Blon to Oxenstierna, 14/24 December 1650. Letters from Spierinck to Oxenstierna are kept in E 725–731.

[19] Noldus 2006b.

[20] Anthony van Dyck painted the only known portrait of Michel le Blon. It is in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada. In 1644 the Flemish painter David Baudringhem made a portrait of le Blon in Amsterdam, but whether this painting still exists and, if so, where it is now, is unknown. Briels 1987, pp. 298–299.

[21] Steneberg 1955, p. 69.

successor Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, known for his flamboyant lifestyle of conspicuous consumption. This seemingly stark contrast between Oxenstierna and De la Gardie is reinforced by a comparison of Beck's bust of the grave, black-clad chancellor with Hendrik van Munnichhoven's 1653 portrait of De la Gardie and his wife Maria Euphrosyne, in which the young, up-and-coming count is shown full-length in sumptuous, extravagant dress. What we see here is a generation gap. De la Gardie represents the new, self-assured Sweden which had effectively had power dropped in its lap, whereas Oxenstierna belonged to the generation that had worked to achieve that power. Although Margareta Revera has rebutted the myth of Magnus De la Gardie as the man who introduced extravagance into Sweden, the image of Axel Oxenstierna as a leader who rejected excessive luxury and favored austerity persists.[22] Beck's portrait of the chancellor, showing Oxenstierna dressed in black, apparently austere clothes, seems to underline this. But we should not be misled; this is a matter of fashion, not asceticism. He is actually wearing an outfit that was the height of fashion for a man of his standing at the time and one, moreover, that is made of the finest and most expensive fabrics. In his portrait of the entrepreneur Louis de Geer, far and away the richest merchant of his day, Beck painted him wearing very similar clothes.[23]

It is clear from his contacts with Michel le Blon that the image of Axel Oxenstierna as a stern ascetic has to be shaded somewhat. The chancellor found in him the ideal person to supply him with works of art and other luxuries. As Sandrart wrote in his *Teutsche Akademie*, published in 1675, le Blon had 'exceptionally great knowledge and perfect judgment of the arts, of which he is an incomparable connoisseur, and in which he instructs all rulers, and inspires in them a passionate love [of the arts], such that we have never before had anyone who knows, loves and has made famous all the arts, in particular those of drawing and of copper engraving for books, so excellently as Maecenas Le Blon, so that he can be described as a father in art, especially to me'.[24] Sandrart went on to say that le Blon owned an art collection

[22] Revera 1988.

[23] The commission for the portrait of Louis de Geer by David Beck may have come about through the intermediary of Oxenstierna or Michel le Blon. On relations between le Blon and de Geer see Noldus 2008.

[24] 'In allem eine besonderliche große Wißenschaft und vollkommenes Urtheil der Kunst, dero er ein unvergleichlicher Liebhaber gewesen, und in der er alle Potentaten unterrichten, auch zu seliger Liebe aufmuntern und antreiben können, so daß wir

which included works by Hans Holbein and Albrecht Dürer and that he had an extensive network of contacts in the art world. In Antwerp, for instance, he was in touch with Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, Willem van de Velde the Elder, Johannes Torrentius and many more.[25] In 1635 le Blon reported that he had bought paintings by Torrentius, a winter landscape by 'Stalpart' [Pieter Stalpaert] and some portraits and books for 848 guilders. Le Blon was confident that Oxenstierna would accept the purchase, since the chancellor had 'a taste for extraordinary, fine and exclusive things'.[26] Le Blon stressed that only the King of England owned work by Torrentius, but the works the chancellor was about to receive were the painter's best. On 3/13 August 1644 Michel le Blon wrote to Axel Oxenstierna to tell him that he was in Antwerp 'on account of the glass manufactory'. He was referring here to Oxenstierna's request that he should assist the glass-blower Melchior Jung in recruiting other glass-makers who might be interested in settling in Stockholm. The chancellor had granted Jung a workshop with a privilege in Stockholm, but Jung was evidently having difficulty finding skilled craftsmen to work there. It would seem highly likely that the motive for opening this glass factory was to produce windows for a specific building, but there is no evidence to tell us which it might have been.

On 18 January 1650 Michel le Blon wrote a letter to another eminent patron, Queen Christina of Sweden (1626–1689, reign 1644–1654).[27] This was not the first time he had written to her; he had, after all, been in the employ of the Swedish empire since 1632. The correspondence between le Blon and Christina only began to take shape, however, when she acceded to the throne at the age of eighteen in 1644. The coronation took place in 1650, but a mere four years later she decided to abdicate after converting to Catholicism. She relinquished all her rights to the throne and stepped down in favor of her succes-

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niemaln jemand gehabt, der alle Künst, besonderlich die Zeichnung oder Handriß und Kupferstich, die zu Büchern gehören, also fürtreflich gekant, geliebt und berühmt gemacht, als under Maecenas Le Blon, daswegen er wol ein Kunstvatter, sonderlich von mir kann genennet werden'. Peltzer 1925, p. 244.

[25] RAS, Enskilda Arkiv, Oxenstierna samlingen, E645: Le Blon to Oxenstierna, 4/14 and 7/17 November 1635.

[26] RAS, Enskilda Arkiv, Oxenstierna samlingen, E645: Le Blon to Oxenstierna, 17/7 November 1635.

[27] RAS, Extranea 60, VI Holland: Michel le Blons avisor.

sor, her cousin Prince Charles Gustav of the Palatinate, thenceforth King Charles X (d. 1660). In the ten years that Christina stood at the head of the Swedish empire she succeeded in making an unforgettable impression on her age. Among the famous scholars she invited to Stockholm were luminaries such as René Descartes, Claude Salmasius and Isaac Vossius. Descartes—whose stay in the north cost him his life because he could not stand the cold—instructed the young queen in Latin and philosophy.[28] As her librarian, Vossius was in part responsible for her growing collection of books. Christina was also very keen to learn about the arts; she acquired books about art and was a passionate collector of paintings, drawings and sculpture. Although it has been pointed out by biographers Veronica Buckley, Leif Åslund, Marie Rodén and others that for generations the queen was the subject of exaggerated portrayals that painted her as an exceptionally gifted Minerva of the North, it is nonetheless fair to say that she was very important to the development of the arts and sciences in her country.[29] To find the things she wanted, Christina availed herself of the services of agents such as Michel le Blon, who was in Amsterdam when he wrote to her in early 1650. As we can see, le Blon's letter sheds light on his activities and network.

> Madam,
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> I had in all humility hoped for this one favor from your Majesty: to have received a word or two in writing to have learnt or heard of your Majesty's pleasure in receiving the rare items I had brought together & sent. I have not neglected thereafter to continue with this by means of all the letters I have exchanged with the most important connoisseurs of rare things, both of classical marble objects and medals and similar curiosities, about which I sent word two months ago by way of Mr Rötling. This with very humble & particular consideration of the agreement eventually concluded with Mr Reijnst [*i.e.* Gerard Reynst] concerning that which he holds or in other words his large collection. The which consists of classical marble statues and busts, gold, silver & bronze medals, urns and exotic creations, paintings, books and almost every sort of rarity, all for the price of forty thousand Rix Dollars all

[28] Descartes' stay in Stockholm was pitifully short. He arrived in September 1649 and died early in 1650. It was not just the bitter cold that finished him off, he could not stand the early rising, either—Christina expected him in the library every morning at five o'clock sharp. 'The thoughts of the people here freeze in the winter, just like the water,' he wrote shortly before his death. Lindroth 1989, pp. 201–202.

[29] Åslund 2005; Buckley 2004; Rodén 2008.

together in cash or thirty thousand Rix Dollars for the rest without the paintings. But although he shows by means of his proofs of purchase that this collection cost him more than this much, he can understand that your Majesty, since she has not seen it and only knows of it from hearsay and consequently cannot be familiar with it, hesitates to accept the agreement. He moreover thinks that the governors of this city are trying to flatter him in an endeavor to acquire the antiquities to decorate their new building or town hall. He has beseeched me to enquire of your Majesty what problem can stand in the way of the aforementioned agreement. May it please your Majesty not to reveal the price of it to anyone in the world. In order not to dash his hopes and the idea he has of being able to get much more for it, and that very easily, I have at last got him to the point where he neither can nor may contemplate doing anything with anyone in the world without a favorable solution or answer from your Majesty. In other words without my being able to assure him that the aforementioned and agreed price will not be publicly disclosed, etc. If, therefore, your Majesty desires to acquire it, it will be necessary to arrive at a solution and to honor me with her goodwill as soon as possible so that this honest man is not led into taking a false step.

And since it is impossible for Mr Quillinus [*sic*] the painter[30] to leave the work on which he has embarked to go to Antwerp in your Majesty's service, the question arises as to whether I should approach Mr Boeckhorst,[31] bachelor, who has studied and traveled very widely, and painted the other two inventions, to set to work on your portrait. Should your Majesty wish me to make it my duty to send him to you—or not?

Have persuaded Master van den Cruice,[32] sculptor of Antwerp, to enter your Majesty's service; that is the man who made the heads of Bacchus and Ariadne, Mars, Venus and Pallas, in marble, bas relief, which you received in the last consignment in accordance with my previous assignment; he works the marble open and in a very rare way and of lesser quality. The question is whether we should send him or not.

I had also let it be known that I had persuaded Quellinnus's brother[33] to enter your service; that is the unusual sculptor in marble, who also made the design for the 9 Muses that I lately sent you. But since your Majesty already has at her disposal an excellent sculptor from Dantzig[34]

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[30] Erasmus Quellinus (Antwerp 1607–Antwerp 1678), painter, known chiefly for his history works.

[31] Jan Boeckhorst or Bockhorst (Rees or Münster *c.*1604–Antwerp 1668), painter. Active in Brussels from 1626.

[32] Jan van de Cruys, sculptor in Antwerp. Master in 1638/1639. Appears in the Antwerp Guild of St Luke's account books from 1646/1647.

[33] Artus Quellinus (Antwerp 1609–Antwerp 1668), sculptor, responsible, among other things, for the decorative scheme of the town hall in Amsterdam that was built to Jacob van Campen's design between 1648 and 1655.

[34] Le Blon is probably referring here to the sculptor Peter Ringerinck (Ringeling, Ringering), who was in service at the Swedish court in 1649. Ringerinck was born in

besides the aforementioned one from Antwerp, it raises the question as to whether this time her Majesty can do without the said Mr. Quellinus having to leave that city, where he is very content.

I have sent word of several marble antiquities and gold medals that are still available in Antwerp. I believe that your Majesty does not wish for them nor for the collection from Frankfurt, the list of which items I sent.

The present requests are made in all humility to avoid the errors that might be made, to examine the selection more effectively taking into account the good wishes of your Majesty, whom I desire to satisfy with all the tasks it shall please her to entrust to me, as I am awaiting instructions to know when I should send the 25 items of antiquities and with whom and in which ship.

I must in all humility thank your Majesty for the settlement sent to me to receive the rest of my advance. Beseeching you very humbly with my son to grant me once more the favor of another new payment of that which she kindly permitted me and charged the Treasury a year ago to receive this year from the licences for Lieslande [*i.e.* Iceland] an outstanding sum from the correspondence from Paris and Brussels over three years. As in a similar manner the annual allowance that it pleased your Majesty to kindly grant to my son for his letters from England and Brabant. For which agreed sums we are refused payment without new instructions or express consent from your Majesty, which we very humbly beg to receive again and undertake to pray to the Almighty to shower your Majesty with his blessings. and to continue in your favor

Madam

From your Majesty's

Most humble and obedient servant

M. le Blon

From Amsterdam 18/28 January 1650

This letter testifies to the considerable inroads Christina was making on the Dutch art market through le Blon's intermediary. He writes of new purchases awaiting shipment, refers to works of art that have

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Flensburg, but moved to Copenhagen at the age of twelve when his father, the sculptor Heinrich Ringerinck, was given a post there. The young Ringerinck completed his training as a sculptor in Danzig around 1632. While he was there he made twelve medallions of Roman emperors as part of the façade decoration of a house at ulic Długa (Langgasse) 29. He traveled over the next few years, entering Christina's service in 1649. In the spring of 1650, however, he returned to Danzig, where he died, according to Axel-Nilsson 1950, p. 417, before 20 June 1650. Le Blon's letter is dated January 1650. To the best of my knowledge there were no other sculptors at the Swedish court at that time who fit le Blon's description. With thanks to Dr Linda Hinners and Prof. Peter Gillgren, Department of Art History, University of Stockholm.

already been sent, discusses artists who might travel to Sweden to enter the queen's service and broaches the subject of new commissions. The most important topics in the letter are the possible acquisition of the Reynst collection and the appointment of a painter and a sculptor to the Swedish court. The merchant Gerard Reynst's collection was among the most renowned of its day. Reynst had inherited it on the death of his brother Jan in 1646. Jan had lived in Venice since 1625, and had built up a large art gallery there.[35] The core of it came from the collection of Andrea Vendramin, which Jan managed to buy up two years after his arrival in Venice. The Vendramin collection included works by Italian artists, both contemporary works and many by sixteenth-century masters, as well as classical statues in marble. On Jan's death, the whole gallery was shipped to Amsterdam, where Gerard, as sole heir, took possession of it. Although he did add to it a few purchases he had previously made at sales, including the sale of the Lucas van Uffelen collection, at the same time he evidently started looking for potential buyers for the impressive collection, in which could also be found 'medals, urns and exotic creations, paintings, books and almost every sort of rarity', as le Blon wrote. As the letter reveals, a buyer could take all or part of the collection, with or without the paintings, as Reynst suggested to Christina by way of her agent le Blon. In the end the sale did not go ahead and the city governors of Amsterdam, who are presented as competitors in the letter, did not buy the collection either. They eventually decided not to decorate the town hall with statues from the Reynst collection and instead commissioned Artus Quellinus to make new works for the project.[36] This is the same Quellinus who is mentioned in the letter; he had previously supplied work to Christina and now, so it seems, she would have liked him to work for the Swedish court. Quellinus, however, was not interested. He had no need to do so, in any case: his workshop in Antwerp was fully occupied with the many commissions he was given during this period, including the work for Amsterdam city council. His older brother Erasmus, the painter, could likewise not see his way to entering Christina's service, wrote le Blon. In his stead he suggested some other artists who were available, among them Jan Boeckhorst and Jan van de

[35] Berghe 1992, p. 26. See also chapter 5.

[36] Ten years later, the city authorities did buy some sculptures and paintings from the collection after all; they presented them to Charles I of England as a gift: Berghe 1992, pp. 27–28.

Cruys. Immediately, though, he expresses the opinion that while Cruys did, it was true, work marble in an open manner that was exceptional, his work was of inferior quality. Compared with whom or what is not clear. Unfortunately we know very little about Jan van de Cruys, which makes it difficult to get an idea of exactly what le Blon meant by this. A little more, although not much, is known about Boeckhorst. This artist, who was probably born in Rees or Münster in 1604, was active in the Southern Netherlands from 1626 onwards. It was here, and hence at a relatively late age, that his career as a painter began. Cornelis de Bie wrote in *Het gulden cabinet vande edel vry schilder-const* of 1662 that in those early years Boeckhorst was a pupil of the Antwerp master Jacob Jordaens. He was also said to have worked in the studios of Rubens and van Dyck.[37] When van Dyck moved to England for good in 1632, Boeckhorst probably got a position with Gaspar de Crayer in Brussels. In 1633–1634 he became a master and a member of the Guild of St Luke in Antwerp. Meanwhile, he maintained contacts with Hendrik van Balen and Jan Wildens, and he worked with Frans Snijders. Boeckhorst's oeuvre, which includes portraits, landscapes, mythological and history works, was heavily influenced by Rubens, van Dyck and Jordaens, and also by Veronese, whose work he saw during trips to Italy in the 1630s. Queen Christina had a particular liking for Italian painting and for the great Flemish masters. Barely two years earlier, on Christina's behalf, le Blon had coordinated the largest commission in Swedish art history to date; 35 ceiling paintings by Jordaens, to be installed in the Hall of Estates of the royal palace in Uppsala. The series, which had to be executed in its entirety in record time, should have been completed in 1649.[38] Given Christina's artistic preferences and the similarity of Boeckhorst's style to that of his former master, it was certainly not a bad idea on le Blon's part to propose Boeckhorst as portrait painter to the queen. It is doubtful, however, that Boeckhorst ever did go to Stockholm; in any event, there are no known works by him in Swedish collections. However, Erasmus Quellinus, who le Blon

[37] According to an anonymous eighteenth-century manuscript in the Louvre.

[38] Steneberg 1955, p. 70. d'Hulst/Poorter/Vandenven 1993, p. 26: 'We cannot be certain whether Jordaens ever completed the commission, or how many pictures actually reached Sweden in the end'. However, Nicodemus Tessin the Younger noted that the paintings never made it to Uppsala but were placed in the library of the Stockholm royal castle, where they were destroyed in the 1697 fire. Michel le Blon coordinated the commission together with his superior Peter Spierinck. See also Noldus 2008, p. 108.

had said was unable to work for the Swedish court, probably did paint a portrait of the queen. The inventory of the painter's estate drawn up after his death in 1678 lists 'in the upstairs room' among canvases by Rubens, van Dyck, Teniers, van de Velde, Veronese and Jordaens, and above all by himself, a work described as 'Een conterfeytsel, Coningin van Sweden'—a likeness of the Queen of Sweden.[39] The inventory does not identify the artist. It could be the grisaille by Quellinus (dated around 1650) depicting Queen Christina as Minerva that is now in the collection of the Musée de la Chartreuse.[40]

It is plain from his letter that Michel le Blon had to navigate warily among the various interested parties. It was important to him to maintain contacts with owners of foremost art collections such as Reynst and to remain on good terms with artists of some eminence such as the Quellinus brothers. At the same time, of course, the relationship with the Swedish queen, a patron whom he most decidedly did not wish to offend, had to be handled with kid gloves. He did not want to disappoint anyone, least of all the queen, but he was compelled to; the Quellinus brothers simply did not want to go to Stockholm. Circumspectly le Blon put forward alternatives, pointed to the qualities of her sculptor Peter Ringerinck of Danzig, enquired as to her views, and asked whether his actions met with her approval and what she would like him to do next. At the same time he cautiously pressed her to make a decision in the matter of the Reynst collection and, last but by no means least, he asked if he might eventually receive some remuneration.

Payment, or rather the absence of it, was a delicate and ticklish business. The failure to pay for services rendered is a recurrent theme in le Blon's contacts with Axel Oxenstierna.[41] In 1632 Oxenstierna had agreed to pay him 1,000 guilders a year, but he seldom received it and then only after repeated urging. Obviously this had to be expressed in very veiled terms so as not to displease the chancellor. Michel le Blon's willingness to continue serving poor payers such as Christina and Oxenstierna—who were certainly not exceptional patrons in this respect—and to press them only cautiously to pay his fee is explained

[39] Denucé 1932, vol. 2, p. 278.

[40] Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai, France. Jean Erasme Quellin, *Portrait allégorique de la reine Christine de Suède*, oil on panel, 24.5 x 19 cm. Inv. no. 2928.

[41] Noldus 2006b, p. 60.

by the rewards of another kind that accrued to the post of agent. Le Blon was definitely not a Swedish agent solely for the money; at least as important to him was the status that came with the position. It was with good reason that he bore the title 'Agent of Sweden' in his coat of arms. This status offered social advancement and protection; it gave him an introduction into other exalted circles, better opportunities for his children to make good marriages and so forth.

This latter consideration was also a factor for Hugo Grotius when he held the post of Swedish ambassador in Paris from 1634 until his death in 1645.[42] After his escape from the Netherlands in 1621, Grotius lived in exile abroad, where his reputation as a scholar soared. Axel Oxenstierna's decision to appoint a commoner and Calvinist such as Grotius as a diplomat was extraordinary and prompted chiefly by Grotius's renown. According to Henk van Nellen, 'had [Grotius] not had to think of his family, he would have been content with a modest position, but because he wanted his children to marry well he aspired to an important office, preferably that of ambassador, preferably based in Paris'.[43] In his post as ambassador Grotius devoted himself to bringing an end to the Eighty Years' War, and at the same time greatly improved his daughters' chances of making advantageous marriages. The converse was also true; a good marriage increased the agent's social status. The Swedish correspondent and factor in Amsterdam, Harald Appelboom, set out deliberately to contract a marriage with Susanna Roseau, the daughter of a wealthy Amsterdam merchant family of Flemish descent. This connection gave him access to circles that were relevant to him in improving his local network and position, and brought him capital for his own trading activities. In a letter to Johan Adler Salvius, the Swedish resident in Hamburg, he explicitly described his marriage as part of his career.[44]

Le Blon was more than an art agent—he also sent 'ordinary' news reports. In September 1648 he sent a packet containing various newsletters.[45] One was a report written for him in The Hague 'by the Agent of Parliament there' on 11 September. This agent, le Blon's source at the States General, reported the arrival of the Scottish general, Sydenham Poyntz, who 'reluctantly' confirmed accounts of the Scottish

[42] On Hugo Grotius in Paris: Nellen 2007 and Ridderikhoff 1995.
[43] Nellen 2007, pp. 387–88.
[44] Droste 2006, pp. 93–94.
[45] RAS, Extranea 60 VI Holland, Michel le Blons avisor.

defeat at the Battle of Preston at the hands of Oliver Cromwell's forces. This decisive victory effectively put an end to the Second Civil War in Britain. Messages like this were clearly relevant and important to the Swedish government, and his contacts in The Hague enabled le Blon to satisfy this interest. The packet of letters also continued a report from Nieuwpoort in French, dated 5 September 1648, and one from Brussels of 9 September in Dutch, reporting on troop movements in the Fronde, the French civil war that had just broken out and was to continue until 1653. There should also have been a communication from England, but 'because of the East wind that has been blowing these past weeks, the ordinary post from England has not arrived'.

Artist-agents such as Michel le Blon were able to exist thanks to increased mobility. Improved maps and itineraries, more stopping places and better means of transportation meant that travel came within reach of more people than ever before. Traders and scholars were among those who had always traveled; artists, too, moved from court to court. For a long time the aristocracy had had little interest in taking trips until the shifting position of the nobility in Northern Europe and elsewhere, brought about by the internationalization and centralization of the state, piqued this group's desire to travel. A new ideal for the nobleman took shape and part of it involved traveling to centres of learning. Travel became an experience, an end in itself. An agent could ensure that patrons could continue to find out about exotic products and developments abroad after they had returned home. Michel le Blon was one such agent, and among the most active of his day. Artist-agents like him also benefited from the great value attached to collecting and owning art in early modern (court) culture.

The foundations of the most important Swedish art collections were laid at the time Michel le Blon was appointed, and thanks in part to him. These collections were first examined in depth by the art historian Olof Granberg.[46] Aside from the purchases made by agents, the seventeenth-century Swedish collections were largely built on war booty from the Thirty Years' War, which had been very successful for Sweden in this regard.[47] In 1631, a year after Sweden had decided

[46] Granberg 1929.

[47] In 2007 the Livrustkammaren museum in Stockholm mounted an exhibition on the spoils of war in Swedish collections: Grönhammar 2007.

to enter the war and had advanced into Germany, first Würzburg and then Mainz fell to the Swedish troops and several art treasures were seized. The following year the army marched into Munich. King Gustav II Adolf occupied the elector's castle and assured the city and its people that they and their possessions were in safe hands. Shortly after this, the electoral library and art collection were plundered and looted. From extensive correspondence between the Swedish commanders and Elector Maximilian I of Bavaria we know what he claimed had been stolen. Meticulously compiled lists reveal that much of what was missing was earlier art; among the dozens of captured works were paintings by Lucas Cranach the Elder, Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein and Quentin Metsys. In 1634 the French diplomat Charles Ogier saw several of the stolen works in the royal castle of Tre Kronor.[48] They subsequently found a place in Queen Christina's collection, as her inventory of 1652 reveals. The appointment of Michel le Blon was a product of the times, reflecting the rapidly growing interest in arts and decorative objects in Sweden.

The summer of 1648 saw the greatest art coup in Scandinavian history. In this, the last year of the Thirty Years' War, Swedish troops entered Prague. During the night of 16 July 1648 the Swedes climbed in over the city walls and by daybreak they had control of Hradčany Palace and other important buildings in the city, putting the collection of Emperor Rudolph II within their grasp. Under the prevailing rules of war, formulated by Hugo Grotius, it was permitted in times of war to seize possessions and take them out of the country. The *ius praedae* or right to booty was widely invoked, and the results can still be seen in collections throughout Europe. But the Swedish troops, led by King Gustav II Adolf and, after his death, by his commander-in-chief, Carl Gustaf Wrangel, were extraordinarily successful in this regard. They succeeded in elevating the capture of war booty to a fine art, originally with the aim of placing the objects in libraries and public collections to contribute to the raising of the standard of education in the country. When the Swedish took the Catholic towns of Würzberg, Mainz and Bamberg in 1631, hundreds of books were confiscated from monasteries and private individuals on Gustav Adolf's orders. The books were taken to Sweden and put in the university library in

[48] Charles Ogier's travel journal was published in Swedish by Sigurd Hallberg in 1914.

Uppsala in order to promote the pursuit of scholarship.[49] A great deal, needless to say, also disappeared into private libraries. Although it was officially forbidden, the authorities turned a blind eye when soldiers went looting because they had not been paid. They were not, however, allowed to take anything of artistic worth—that was the preserve of the commanding officers, because such objects accorded with their social status. After the capture of Prague, King Charles X rewarded Carl Gustaf Wrangel for his efforts with several pieces of art from the imperial collection, including a celestial globe on a horse made by the goldsmith Gerhard Emoser in Vienna in 1579.[50] In Wrangel's castle of Skokloster, on Lake Mälaren between Uppsala and Stockholm, there are paintings, arms and books that probably also came from Prague, among them two paintings by Rudolf II's court painter Guiseppe Arcimboldo. As soon as she got word of the attack, Queen Christina gave orders that the art treasures should be shipped from Prague to Sweden—these were definitely the spoils of war. There was no time to lose; the peace negotiations with the emperor were in full swing, and as soon as the treaty was signed any war booty would have to be left behind. In great haste the valuable works of art were packed up and carried off. This was how a significant part of the most important art collection of the age, one which set the standard for royal art collections in Europe, arrived unhindered in Sweden in the wake of the vehement protests of the imperial envoys. Among the items were paintings by Frans II Francken and Bartholomeus Spranger, as well as scientific instruments, globes, books and sculptures by Giovanni da Bologna and others.[51]

In the Royal Library in Stockholm a little book is preserved, entitled *Inventaire des Raretez qui sont dans le cabinet des antiquitez de la serenissime Reine de Suede* (inventory of the rare objects in the collection of antiquities of Her Serene Highness, the Queen of Sweden), in which Queen Christina's secretary Raphael Trichet du Fresne kept a list of all the objects in her collection.[52] On 24 September 1653 Trichet du Fresne updated the inventory. A little while earlier, just before his

[49] The majority are still in Uppsala University library: Müller 1979.

[50] Rangström s.d., p. 8. Wrangel gave the globe to Queen Christina; it is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

[51] Bussmann/Schilling 1998, pp. 405–411.

[52] Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm, vol. S 4, *Inventaire des Raretez qui sont dans le cabinet des antiquitez de la serenissime Reine de Suede. Fait l'an 1652.*

death in February 1652, resident Peter Spierinck, on his own initiative, had sent the queen eleven paintings by Gerard Dou, whose patron he was. Cosimo III de' Medici of Florence paid high prices for Dou, while King Charles II of England offered the artist the post of court painter (which Dou refused).[53] In the inventory, however, Trichet du Fresne wrote 'Rendu' ('returned' or 'sent') in the margin beside the Dou paintings. I had previously interpreted this to mean that Christina had rejected the works, given her decided preference for Italian art. The queen had, after all, once said that she would gladly swap all the drawings she owned by artists from north of the Alps for two Raphaels.[54] However, Christina had announced in 1651 that she would give up the throne, a step she actually took in 1654, and she already had plans to leave the country. It is therefore not inconceivable that the note refers to preparations for her impending departure, first to Antwerp and later to Rome. It is possible that the paintings were not sent back but sent ahead to her new residence. The marginal note beside the great majority of the curiosities in the inventory reads 'de Prague'; in other words these objects, together with all the other valuables, decorative arts and books, had been seized in Prague. Among them were fifty-two 'curios from the Indies' for Christina's collection of curiosities and more than five hundred paintings. Many of the other objects in the inventory, subdivided into such categories as 'bronze statues, large and small', 'the cabinets' and 'ivories', were purchased in Amsterdam through the intermediary of 'sieur Spiring' [Peter Spierinck], 'sr. Blom' [Michel le Blon] and 'sr. Apelbom' [Harald Appelboom]. Among the things they bought for Christina were 'marble figures', 'the figure of Mercury in ivory standing on an ebony pedestal' and various paintings of mythological and biblical subjects.

The celebrated marshal Carl Gustaf Wrangel was another of Michel le Blon's Swedish clients.[55] Le Blon also kept Wrangel (1613–1676) informed of political and trade news from the Republic and supplied

[53] One of the 'refused' Dou paintings is *Interior with Young Violinist*, now in the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh.

[54] Bjurström 1997, p. 125.

[55] Other Swedish patrons in le Blon's portfolio included Prince Karl Gustav, Magnus De la Gardie, Per Brahe the Younger, Johan Axelsson Oxenstierna and Gabriel Gabrielsson Oxenstierna. See the register of letter writers in the *Register över brevskrivare i enskilda samlingar* at RAS. See also Römelingh 1986 for the exact location of the correspondence between le Blon and his Swedish commissioners.

him with luxury goods, such as books and works of art, on commission. He also provided him with contacts in the art world. Thanks to Arne Losman's research into Carl Gustaf Wrangel's European network, we know that Wrangel leaned heavily on a circle of cultural agents in building up his image as the learned, art-loving nobleman, a true example of the modern aristocracy.[56] The Swedish resident in London, Johan Leijonbergh, once wrote to Wrangel that he regarded him as 'exceedingly enquiring and a lover of curiosities',[57] an apt description of one of the greatest consumers of luxury goods of his time. Wrangel collected arms and armor, sculptures, paintings, books and more. He had his portrait painted on a number of occasions, among others by Matthäus Merian the Younger, the brother-in-law of Michel le Blon's brother Christoffel, who also entered Wrangel's service, probably through le Blon's intercession. He was also not to be outshone when it came to building. He commissioned great town houses in Stockholm and Stralsund and the castles of Gripenberg and Skokloster, the latter being one of the most spectacular examples of seventeenth-century Swedish architecture. As we have seen, Wrangel was also involved in the wholesale seizure of artistic and scholarly war booty. In the end, though, he simply bought the majority of his collection of books and art. Michel le Blon was one of his permanent agents.[58]

Wrangel visited the Republic for the first time in 1630, when he was seventeen. That year he enrolled at the Leiden University, where he stayed for just under twelve months. In the spring of 1631 he continued his educational tour with a visit to Paris, returning to Sweden that summer by way of The Hague, Leiden and Amsterdam.[59] On his return he embarked on the military career that would see him in the years that followed at the head of Sweden's forces in all the major conflicts in which the country became embroiled. He sealed his position at the Battle of Fehmarn on 13 October 1644, when the defeat of the Danish fleet brought the Torstenson War to an end. The Swedish victory marked the end of Danish supremacy in the Baltic. For Wrangel, the battle was also a personal victory that brought him the position of commander-in-chief of the Swedish army and the title of count. Not surprisingly, Wrangel wanted a record made of this naval battle, in a

[56] Losman 1980 is still the standard work on Wrangel and his network.
[57] Losman 1980, p. 218.
[58] On Wrangel's building undertakings see Eimer 1961 and Noldus 2004, p. 141.
[59] Uppsala Universitets Bibliotek, vol. X 287, 23ff.

series of paintings and a set of tapestries—and even in a wooden board game with the battle inlaid in intarsia in the lid. The piece is attributed to Adam Eck, who is said to have made it in the mid 1640s after a popular print of the battle by Claes Jansz. Visscher.[60] When it came to commissioning the tapestries and paintings, Wrangel got in touch with Michel le Blon in 1651. Le Blon's letters to Wrangel about the immortalization of the Battle of Fehmarn give us a unique insight into the way le Blon used his network and exercised influence on Wrangel.[61] The correspondence also includes previously unpublished ego-documents by the marine artists Simon de Vlieger and Willem van de Velde the Elder and by the tapestry weaver Maximiliaen van der Gucht, who had meanwhile taken over the tapestry workshop owned by the family of le Blon's superior, Peter Spierinck, in Delft.[62] Wrangel had van der Gucht in mind for the tapestries. At that moment he was working on another commission for him—a set of *English Hunting Scenes* to be supplied by the van der Gucht workshop. In January 1652 van der Gucht wrote to Wrangel to tell him that he had received the order for twelve tapestries for two rooms and expected to be able to deliver them by the end of May.[63] For one room he would produce five scenes 'of beautiful groves, with fine beasts and birds in them which will be decorated with silk, and in the centre foreground of each piece His Excellency's coat of arms, with a beautiful border around it'. The second room was to be hung with what were described as 'pergola' tapestries: 'a hunting scene with landscapes, and fine pillars at the sides'. The design of the landscapes in some of the tapestries is attributed to Simon de Vlieger.[64] This was the same de Vlieger that Wrangel suggested to le Blon should execute the paintings of the Battle of Fehmarn.

Besides being a landscape painter, Simon de Vlieger (*c.* 1600/01–1653) was one of the Republic's most eminent marine artists and a major influence on the development of the genre from a primarily monochrome to a more colorful palette. De Vlieger came from Rotterdam and worked for years in Delft before settling in Weesp, not far from Amsterdam. He could count among his pupils artists such as

[60] Voigt 1999, pp. 297–298. The board game is in the collection in Skokloster Slott.
[61] Publication of this correspondence is forthcoming.
[62] Noldus 2006a, p. 177.
[63] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, E8401, Max. van der Gucht to Carl Gustaf Wrangel, 15 January 1652.
[64] Hartkamp-Jonxis 2006, pp. 62–63.

Willem van Diest, Abraham van Beyeren and Willem van de Velde, who went on to become highly esteemed painters.[65] De Vlieger's teeming, atmospheric seascapes were highly prized in his own lifetime and so he seemed very sure of himself when he wrote to Michel le Blon in December 1651. Le Blon had evidently approached him at Wrangel's request to sound him out about painting the naval battle. De Vlieger was happy to accept the commission, but could 'not give any estimate as to what such a battle might cost, not knowing the number of vessels nor the order of battle and whether it should be a high or a low horizon'.[66] Nevertheless the artist was confident that they would be able to come to terms: 'I have no doubt that we will reach agreement as to the price for I am assured of my lord's goodwill towards painters and painting. I do not doubt that my lord will reward my work according to his customary discretion'. But Simon de Vlieger was mistaken. The commission was not necessarily a foregone conclusion. Michel le Blon had meanwhile suggested to Wrangel that he might like to consider other possibilities. In January 1652 le Blon wrote that he had been in touch with a 'fine artist' in Amsterdam who had made a 'perfect drawing' of the battle.[67] He had clearly acted on his own initiative.

The artist was de Vlieger's former pupil Willem van de Velde the Elder (1611–1693). The Amsterdam-born van de Velde was famous in his own time for his pen paintings, a specialism which he can be said to have invented.[68] Strictly speaking, a pen painting is a drawing, not a painting, and in van de Velde's day it would be described as 'a work drawn with the pen', just as the artist would be referred to as a 'teykenaar'—draughtsman—rather than a painter. Willem van de Velde signed his letters 'Scheepsteickenaer'—naval draughtsman.[69] The pen painting technique developed out of printmaking. It involved drawing with a pen on prepared parchment, panel and later on canvas, too, in black, brown and grey ink. Van de Velde originally worked on panel, but although the earliest of his pen paintings on canvas that we know of dates from 1657, it appears from a letter the artist sent Wrangel by way of le Blon that he would do the works for Wrangel

[65] On Simon de Vlieger: Gaschke 2008; Giltaij/Kelch 1996; Kelch 1971; Keyes 1990.
[66] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, E8401, Simon de Vlieger to Michel le Blon, 13 December 1651.
[67] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, E8401, Michel le Blon to Carl Gustaf Wrangel, 24 January 1652.
[68] Lammertse 1996, p. 47.
[69] Lammertse 1996, p. 45.

on canvas. The letter also reveals that the piece could be produced in an exceptionally large format. 'I wish to have the honor of making a piece and even were it to be 20 or 25 feet longer, I can do it, having so practiced that I can draw on canvases that can be cleaned'.[70] A pen work was by no means inferior to a painting, insisted van de Velde; his works were 'as good as a painting'. This last remark suggests that he thought Wrangel was unfamiliar with pen paintings. Le Blon also took the time to explain this unusual specialism to his patron and list its practical advantages. 'His work or drawing puts copper prints to shame in its precision and perfection, on white canvases or panels which are prepared such that they can be hung in the rain and the wind, and can be washed with a sponge, just like oil paintings; he can make them as small or as large as you like, up to 30 feet long'.[71]

We can also make out from le Blon's letter that van de Velde had already drawn the battle in sketches that Wrangel would have to approve before work could start on the actual pictures. Le Blon wrote to Wrangel on 10/20 February 1652:

> To gain more information and save time I have devoted all my efforts to move vande Velde likewise (on Your Excellency's word that he will make the 3 sketches) to make for us the same 3 in small, flat form to send to Your Excellency so that after he has corrected the same and sent them back here, he may then draw 3 sketches of all the ships and the circumstances in their entirety and make patterns of them. So that once the height and width of the 3 large pieces has been decided upon, they can either be copied with the pen by vande Velde, or painted in oils by Mr de Vlieger.

In other words, once Wrangel had approved the sketches, they could be transformed either into pen paintings by Willem van de Velde or oil paintings by Simon de Vlieger. Le Blon left no doubt as to his preference; he believed that van de Velde was definitely the better choice, 'and that no one in the world could serve Your Excellency better and more to your liking than this man, if Your Excellency should wish to have it drawn fine on large or small fine white canvases'. Le Blon stressed yet again that while de Vlieger was certainly a talented artist,

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[70] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, vol. E8401, Willem van de Velde the Elder to Carl Gustaf Wrangel, undated but folded into a letter from Michel le Blon 10/20 February 1652.

[71] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, vol. E8401, Michel le Blon to Carl Gustaf Wrangel, undated but folded into a letter from le Blon, 10/20 February 1652.

he would have to work 'without the ordinances and positions of all the ships and everything that happened that van de Velde has' and he was therefore not convinced that de Vlieger would be able 'to do it so perfectly'. Buying the ordinances from van de Velde was not an option since 'he will not let them out of his hands for any money'. Here le Blon was playing on van de Velde's fame as an extremely accurate reporter of naval battles. He spent a great deal of time at sea and had been present at several battles in the course of his career. Although he had not witnessed the Battle of Fehmarn, he had based his sketches on reports from seamen who had fought in it. Admiral Maarten Thijsen (Ankerhielm), the commander of the Dutch fleet that had supported the Swedish in the battle, seven other captains and the most experienced sailors 'all judged that it was impossible to improve upon'. The popular engraving of the battle that Wrangel had asked about (probably the same one on which the wooden board game was based) was rejected by le Blon. 'Your Excellency's view that the copper print that was published is by this master [van de Velde], that is completely different, for that is just a clumsy plate of an old battle and only the flags and the names have been changed'.

Michel le Blon did everything in his power to persuade Wrangel of what he saw as the superior quantity of van de Velde's work. Admittedly van de Velde was younger and not as well known as de Vlieger, but a work by him was something quite exceptional. And should Wrangel wish for both pen works and oil paintings of the battle, le Blon could recommend in Simon de Vlieger's stead Willem van de Velde's son, Willem van de Velde the Younger (1633–1707): 'a very good painter in oils of seascapes and battles'.[72] Like his father, van de Velde the Younger had been a pupil of Simon de Vlieger for several years and apparently could hold his own against his master at the tender age of nineteen. All the same, the agent could not afford to put too much pressure on his patron. He had, of course, to give him the feeling that he would ultimately 'choose and decide'. It is not clear, though, what this decision was. In the Skokloster collection there are two works signed by Willem van de Velde, but they are drawings on paper, not pen paintings. They would appear to be the preparatory sketches were it not for the fact that the images are reversed. This means they could

[72] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, E8401, Michel le Blon to Carl Gustaf Wrangel, 3/12 March 1652.

not be used for the large pen paintings. It seems more likely that these are cartoons for tapestries—the design always has to be supplied to weavers in mirror image because they work with the back of the piece facing them. Or as Maximiliaen van der Gucht wrote to Wrangel: 'and if His Excellency has the battle painted, it all has to be painted back to front then it will come the right way round in the tapestry'.[73] If Wrangel had finally decided to have only the tapestries made, van de Velde's 'sketches' would have been accurate enough, and strictly speaking it would not have been necessary to have paintings produced as well. In the event, Michel le Blon's efforts appear to have been in vain; we know of neither paintings nor tapestries of the battle. And whereas the letters refer to three drawings, only two have survived. Olaf Granberg discovered them when he wrote his book on Skokloster in 1903; according to him the drawings had been lying rolled up in the castle attic all that time.[74]

It was by no means uncommon for patrons to put their requests for political and cultural news to one and the same person, as le Blon's clients did. Denmark, the other major power in Northern Europe, used its agents in exactly the same way. Among those serving King Christian IV (1577–1648) was Jonas Charisius. Charisius (1571–1619), a Danish diplomat, emerged as an important intermediary in political and cultural relations between Denmark and the Netherlands. In 1607 Charisius spent just under a year in the Republic in connection with the peace negotiations with Spain. While he was there, he was expected to acquire art and musical instruments for his sovereign. The king did not specify what sort of works of art they should be or who should make them—he left all that to Charisius.[75] Charisius thereupon made contact with the painter Pieter Isaacsz—born in Amsterdam, but raised in Denmark—who introduced him to his network. Some years

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[73] RAS, Skoklostersamlingen, E8401, Maximiliaen van der Gucht to Carl Gustaf Wrangel, via Michel le Blon, 15 January 1652. Opinions are divided on this: the late Van de Velde expert Michael S. Robinson was convinced that the drawings were cartoons for the tapestries (letter in the Skokloster archives relating to inv. no. 1675), a view that Friso Lammertse (curator Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam) shares. However, textile curator Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis (until her retirement in January 2009 curator of textiles at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) doubts this; she thinks the drawings are too small for the purpose: Hartkamp-Jonxis 2006, pp. 66–67.

[74] Granberg 1903, p. 36.

[75] Jonas Charisius's mission to the Netherlands is examined in Noldus (forthcoming). On the matter of initiative, see also chapter 5.

later, at Charisius's instigation, Isaacsz was appointed to the post of court painter to Christian IV. Like Charisius, he also became involved in politics, initially as the representative of the States General and, from 1620 onwards, in an entirely different capacity—as a spy in the pay of the Swedish chancellor Oxenstierna.[76] Together Charisius and Isaacsz were largely responsible for the art policy pursued by the Danish court in the years between Charisius's mission in 1607 and Isaacsz's death in 1625. With their backgrounds as diplomat and artist respectively they complemented each other and saw to it that both their networks profited from the connection.

It is quite possible that Michel le Blon, who worked on the frontier between politics and art in exactly the same way, knew Jonas Charisius and Pieter Isaacsz. Charisius stayed in Amsterdam on several occasions after his mission in 1607, while Isaacsz lived there until 1614 and returned many times after that. As far as we know, however, le Blon never provided any services to the Danish monarch. His friend Theodoor Rodenburg (*c.*1574–1644), on the other hand, certainly did. He worked as a correspondent for the king in the 1630s. Rodenburg moved in the same circles as Isaacsz, which makes it likely that le Blon and Isaacsz also knew each other. In an ode to the Amsterdam artists of the age Rodenburg wrote of 'Your Pieter Ysacx, whom Denmark stole'.[77] Rodenburg is one of the most remarkable figures in the history of early modern agents. Born in Antwerp to parents who were originally from Amsterdam, he emerged simultaneously as a poet and playwright and as a diplomat, political correspondent and informant for various newsagents. He led a peripatetic existence, traveling from court to court, offering his services in England, Spain, Denmark and Brussels, acting now as the representative of the States General, and now as the agent of a foreign ruler.[78] But whether that was actually the case was sometimes questioned. The English diplomat Sir Francis Cottington, for instance, wrote to William Trumbull after meeting him in Brussels: 'Here is arrived one Rodenburg, who calls himself the commissioner from the [Dutch] States United. I have spoken with him, and find him so full of vanity as I must either doubt that he hath no such commission or suspect the wisdom of those States for giving it

[76] On Pieter Isaacsz's many-faceted career: Noldus 2007.
[77] The poem is printed in full in Roever 1885, p. 172.
[78] Hoenselaars/Abrahamse 1996.

to him'.[79] Others did take him seriously, among them the Danish king, Christian IV. In 1620 Rodenburg offered his services as a political informant and representative and was appointed as such.[80] However, the proposal he put to Christian a year later really does border on the incredible. Possibly at Pieter Isaacsz's instigation, Rodenburg offered to arrange to purchase for him a total of three hundred and fifty paintings, including works by such great Dutch and Flemish names as Maerten van Heemskerk, Lucas van Leyden, Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel, Anthony van Dyck, Frans Hals, Karel van Mander and Hendrick Avercamp. For reasons that are still unclear, the sale did not go through and for the time being these works remained where they were—if they had ever existed in the first place.[81] He also declared that he knew several artists who were all prepared to move to Denmark, among them the Amsterdam painter Salomon de Bray.[82]

At this time Rodenburg was living in Copenhagen, near the royal country estate of Rosenborg. His letters to the court testify to a wide range of activities. He provided the king with information on Dutch trade and with letters from correspondents in London and Antwerp, and he reported on the purchase of such items as paintings and books. Nevertheless he did not stay in Copenhagen for long.[83] By 1623 he was back in The Hague, where he wrote to Axel Oxenstierna, this time offering the Swedish king his diplomatic services. In the letter, written in dog Latin, in which he committed the *faux pas* of addressing the chancellor in the familiar voice, he asked Oxenstierna to put in a good word for him with King Gustav II Adolf, whom he had already approached with a request to join his service.[84] Rodenburg received no reply to his missive, but he did work for Sweden nonetheless, albeit indirectly, as Michel le Blon's correspondent in Brussels. From 1628 onwards, Rodenburg was stationed in Brussels, where he had taken

[79] Quoted from Groote 1974, p. 169.
[80] Worp 1895, p. 210.
[81] The full list is printed in Kernkamp 1902, pp. 226–230.
[82] The names of merchants, brewers, founders, casters, tapestry makers, weavers and painters who were all ready to move to Denmark. Rodenburg's harvest of potential Danish immigrants was due to 'the aggravating situation in this country', as he wrote; in 1621 the Republic was at war again, whereas in 1608 the future had looked bright and nobody had been interested in leaving. Kernkamp 1902, pp. 189–256.
[83] Letters from Rodenburg in the Rigsarkiv Copenhagen (RAK), TKUA 1506–1770, Speciel Del, Nederlandene, B. Gesandtskabsrelationer, 70–41. Nielsen 1872, p. 631.
[84] RAS, Enskilda Arkiv, Oxenstierna samlingen, E695: Theodoor Rodenburg to Axel Oxenstierna, The Hague, 12 September 1623.

yet another new path in his diplomatic career, this time representing Duke Frederik III of Schleswig-Holstein as his resident.[85] Michel le Blon, who knew him from his time in Amsterdam, stayed with him in 1638 and enrolled him as a correspondent. After Rodenburg's death in 1644, his widow wrote to Axel Oxenstierna with an accompanying letter from le Blon about arrears of payment. According to the widow, this was not the chancellor's fault, nor le Blon's; the blame lay with le Blon's superior, Peter Spierinck. Although Theodoor Rodenburg's career had been a turbulent one over the years and by no means always successful, it illustrates just how intimately intertwined the networks of agents were.

As has become clear, Michel le Blon was not the only agent with an artistic background. Pieter Isaacsz, commissioner of the States General in Denmark and later spy for Sweden, was a painter. Theodoor Rodenburg was originally a poet and dramatist. Neither abandoned his profession as a working artist when he was given a diplomatic post—any more than a 'real' diplomat such as Charisius gave up his job when he started to deal in art. On the contrary, combining the two roles was often extremely useful. The diplomatic world and the world of the arts threw up different contacts and networks that could derive mutual benefit. Diplomats and the people they represented gave access to wealthy and influential patrons, while artists proved to be ideally suited to the role of informant. In the previous chapter, Marika Keblusek pointed out how on more than one occasion the painter and diplomat Peter Paul Rubens used paintings as a cover for smuggling secret intelligence from the Southern to the Northern Netherlands. The money Pieter Isaacsz received from Axel Oxenstierna for his secret letters was passed off as payments for paintings. So as not to awaken suspicion, he occasionally did send works to Sweden. The English composer John Dowland also used his art as a cover.[86] In all these cases art was used as a cloak for political espionage and the artist was the perfect intermediary, because in these grey areas of diplomacy he could operate more discreetly and unobtrusively than an envoy. There is no evidence to suggest that Michel le Blon himself ever overstepped the bounds of propriety, but he certainly paid others to do it for him, as he openly

[85] Kernkamp 1902, pp. 201–202.
[86] On John Dowland in Denmark, see chapter 10 and Hauge 2001.

admitted in his agreement with Oxenstierna of May 1632: 'all unusual and extraordinary expenses that I might incur to gain information from someone, to obtain copies of important documents'.

The correspondence between Michel le Blon and his Swedish patrons Axel Oxenstierna, Queen Christina and Carl Gustaf Wrangel discussed in this essay related primarily to matters to do with art. Initially, however, the contacts with Oxenstierna, Christina and Wrangel had consisted of political newsletters, as the contract of 1632 reveals. The cultural aspect came later. At first political news was key; later le Blon began to meet their requests in the cultural field. In early modern Europe, political relations, good and bad, and trade interests often went hand in hand with cultural exchanges. In his role as agent Michel le Blon made a considerable contribution to the spread of art from the Netherlands in Sweden. He offered his principals an introduction to the flourishing art markets of Amsterdam, Antwerp and even Italy. As an intermediary, he was able to exercise great influence on the tastes and collections of his patrons. The same applied to Jonas Charisius and Pieter Isaacsz, to whom Christian IV of Denmark entrusted his policy on art. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that they were permitted to exercise this influence. In most cases, after all, the commissions were open-ended and left scope for interpretation. Oxenstierna, Christina and Wrangel were all well-traveled and well-read people. And yet they left their art policy up to Michel le Blon. They were well aware that it made sense to entrust this aspect to an agent with the right network.

CHAPTER TEN

JOHN DOWLAND'S EMPLOYMENT AT THE ROYAL DANISH COURT: MUSICIAN, AGENT—AND SPY?

Peter Hauge

Music and spies always seem to have fascinated audiences throughout history. Even during the twentieth century the notion of music being a secret language by which important messages could be transmitted inspired the Hollywood director Josef von Sternberg to make a film with Marlene Dietrich playing the leading role as agent 'X27' and the Austrian Secret Service sending their most seductive piano-playing and composing agent to spy on the Russians.[1] It is therefore not surprising that works of reference, including various dictionaries of music, often briefly mention that musicians of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages were frequently employed as spies: Thomas Morley, Anthony Holborne, Alfonso Ferrabosco, Angelo Notari and Peter Philips are just a few of those connected with the darker activities of Sir Francis Walsingham, Robert Devereaux, the Earl of Essex, or Sir Robert Cecil. Official records reveal that in 1599 Holborne, for instance, 'was sent with letters for her Majesty's service to Mr. George Guylpyn her Highness's Agent with the States of the united Provinces'.[2] Ferrabosco, an Italian musician and composer who spent long periods in England, was arrested by the Inquisition in Rome for his possible activities as a spy, because—as it turned out—he had been carrying valuables to English agents in Venice as well as promising Elizabeth 'to return to England and to advise her about Italian matters pertinent to her state'.[3] It is important to keep in mind, however, that the incidents which are today often popularly interpreted as evidence of spying might not necessarily accord with the Renaissance understanding of the term;

[1] The film *Agent X27 'dishonored'* was produced in 1931 and directed by Josef von Sternberg.

[2] Jeffery 1968, p. 136.

[3] Document transcribed and translated in Monson 2003, pp. 12–15, quotation on p. 14.

there is a fine distinction between being an informant and being a spy, and it is evident from the above quotations that neither Holborne nor Ferrabosco were spies in the truest sense.

It is doubtful whether the many musicians employed to carry letters into foreign countries necessarily had anything to do with spying. According to the records of the Inquisition concerning Ferrabosco, the information gathering which he was asked to carry out by the English government was considered equal to that of having 'consorted with diverse heretics', being married to one, and having eaten 'meat on forbidden days'.[4] Collecting information—or news gathering—evaluating and sending it on to appropriate governmental officials was merely a method of keeping abreast in an age when telephones, internet, newspapers and television did not exist; when distances would seem enormous and traveling was a tiresome experience. Information was just as valuable to a late Renaissance government's decision-making as it is for the working of a modern government, but at that time it demanded a tremendous effort and a complex system or a network involving many people. Providing a description of a town, a country's political system and military activities, its geography, and lists of counselors, merchants and other important persons, might not be spying but rather reporting on information available to anyone who could read and write. It can be difficult to assess whether a person was an informant or a spy, since spying was carried out undercover, often written in code and hidden, whereas informants did not have to encode their letters and send them in secret.[5] Musicians, who were used to writing in a musical language employing weird and complex systems of symbols only understood by a few and who were able to interpret and decode a notation demanding great skill and knowledge, would be particularly prone to shady demands by official authorities such as Walsingham and Cecil. Giambattista della Porta's *De furtivis literarum notis* (Naples 1602) on secret codes mentions that musical ciphers were employed by Italian and Spanish diplomats to carry secret messages.[6] Later, John Wilkins in his *Mercury: Or the Secret and Swift Messenger. Shewing, How a Man May with* Privacy *and* Speed *Communicate his* Thoughts *to a Friend at Any Distance* (1641) shows

[4] Monson 2003, p. 14.
[5] Noldus 2006a, pp. 61–63.
[6] Gouk 1999, p. 117.

how pitches and rhythms combined into a melody may contain hidden secrets.[7]

Because of the difficulties in obtaining reliable information concerning political and trading conditions throughout Europe, private travelers, the young aristocratic gentlemen furthering their education abroad, for example, were also openly encouraged to write down all their observations and experiences. During the first half of the seventeenth century, a large number of books (*vade-mecum*) very often in small format and hence easy to carry in a pocket, were published, dealing with how to obtain information and how to describe the political climate of a country.[8] The Earl of Essex, Robert Devereaux, who had his own personal 'army' of spies and informants wrote a short book titled *Profitable Instructions, Describing What Speciall Observations Are to Be Taken by Travellers in All Nations, States and Countries* (1633). Essex—or his secretary (that is, 'keeper of secrets') William Davison,[9] who is mentioned on the title page, too—argues that 'the best scholler is fittest for a Traveller, as being able to make the most useful observation' (Fig. 12).[10] The author provides lists of what must be observed 'in the State of any Prince, or Country', ranging from policy and government to people, nobles as well as strangers including denizens and non-denizens. At the same time it is emphasized that the informant must also be knowledgeable about England so as to be able to draw comparisons as well as judging what would be interesting to know from an English perspective; that is, what would be advantageous for English officials to know when planning international policies: 'no more than a man can know the swiftnesse of his horse without seeing him well matched'.[11]

Musicians, who very often found employment in foreign countries, were therefore considered ideal persons for procuring information because they could travel without drawing too much attention. In addition, it must be kept in mind that by the standards of the time

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[7] Wilkins 1641, pp. 75–77; see also Kircher 1650, p. 362.

[8] Eliot 1592; Dallington 1605; *Direction* 1643; Godall 1630; Hall 1617; Howell 1642; *King of Denmarck* 1642; Meyer 1589; *Short Survey* 1632.

[9] In the 1580s Davison was employed in Walsingham's office, coding and decoding letters; cf. Lee 1888, pp. 173–182, and Haynes 1992, pp. 23 and 96.

[10] Devereaux 1633, f. A3v.

[11] Devereaux 1633, pp. 81–82. The instructions provided in the book agree with those found in reports concerning diplomatic negotiations, see e.g. BL, Add. MS 48512 and Add. MS 48128.

musicians were often highly educated as they could read and write and some could even speak several foreign languages. When their voices broke, choirboys, for instance, were not just discharged but were often sent to school, sometimes continuing their studies at universities.[12] Some groups of musicians employed at courts would have access to the inner circles where important political and economic decisions were discussed and taken. A few musicians had an even closer contact with the head of state than other musicians. A king's personal lutenist was often able to move around in the king's private chambers while the king and his counselors were present, and some might receive free board by sitting at the table in private chambers, perhaps with one of the royal counselors. Advice and discussions concerning highly sensitive matters and gossip, too, were thus close at hand. It would therefore seem foolish to miss the opportunity to engage such a musician as an informant or even as a spy. Furthermore, a few chosen musicians were employed as agents to procure goods, usually instruments or items for instruments; often they were also consulted in connection with the employment of musicians and acted as negotiators regarding salaries and pensions. Buying instruments and hiring new employees was a costly affair, and occasionally the musical agent was entrusted with large sums of money which, at least from a modern point of view, might seem very hazardous.

The case of the famous lutenist John Dowland (1563–1626) illustrates well all these aspects of agency. In November 1595, after having spent long periods at various places in France, Germany and Italy, Dowland wrote an extensive letter to the Secretary of State, Robert Cecil, the purpose of which was clearly to show his loyalty to Elizabeth and to promote himself for a position at the English court. In his letter he explains that when in Rome he had spoken with English Catholics wishing to murder Queen Elizabeth; he provides detailed information and the names of English exiles. It is apparent that he sought to distance himself from them. Dowland ends the letter remarking that he has heard that 'the Kinge of Spain is making gret preparation to com for England this next somer [*i.e.* 1596], wher if it pleasde yo. honor

[12] There are indications suggesting there was a distinction between trumpeters and drummers and other musicians and singers: the former often signed receipts of payment with an 'X' suggesting that they could not even write their own name; cf. RAK, Udg. konto nr. 7 [C.d.], 'Bilag til rentemesterregnskab 1600–1601'.

to advise me by my poore wyff I wolde most willingly lose my lyffe against them'.[13] In his detailed letter offering his services to Robert Cecil, which he wrote from Nuremberg, it is apparent that Dowland recognizes that he needs to distance himself from the English exiles. He hoped to return to England, securing a much desired post as lutenist at Elizabeth's court. More than a year later, in December 1596, it seems that he was still abroad, for his former master, Henry Noel, wrote to Dowland indicating that he might be able to obtain a post at Elizabeth's court. Unfortunately Noel died two months later. Dowland, who possibly was in England in 1597, might have been approached by members of a Danish delegation sent to London in August that year. The delegation was in England to return the Order of the Garter of Frederik II who died in 1588. Melchior Borchgrevinck, the chapel organist, was part of the retinue and his assignment was, among other things, to buy musical instruments for the Danish Chapel Royal.[14] In any case, a year later he accepted a position at the Danish court and received his contract of employment on 18 November 1598.[15]

During the summer and until late autumn 1598, English delegations stayed in Copenhagen to lodge fierce protests and to represent the case of some merchants who had been reduced to extreme poverty by the harsh measures enforced by the Danish king about access to the Baltic Sea (Fig. 13). An English captain had been accused of fraud and the Danish customs at Elsinore had therefore confiscated the ship's cargo.[16] The delegation was successful in their negotiations and two representatives received 40,000 Danish daler (corresponding to approximately £20,000) to hand over to the English merchants who had been affected by the confiscation. However, the disputes which had been going on since the time of Christian IV's father, Frederik II, were far more serious and would continue to escalate until Elizabeth's death in 1603. The issue was complicated and the confiscation of goods was only part of the problem. The English complained also about the heavy dues which

[13] For a facsimile and modern transcription of the letter: Poulton 1982, pp. 37–40 and 256; diplomatic transcription with introduction by Pinto: www.philological.bham.ac.uk.

[14] Hammerich 1892, p. 17; RAK, 'Rentemesterregneskab, 1597–1598', afd. 19, 11 August 1597.

[15] RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1599–1600', afd. 19, 18 August 1599. It should be noted that the entry concerning Dowland's employment was entered a year later, that is, when he received his first yearly salary.

[16] For a detailed discussion of the incident see Hauge 2001a.

were levied on English vessels wishing to proceed through the narrow Sound to the Baltic; they did not get rebates as did, for example, the Dutch fleet. In addition, fishing rights around the northern parts of Norway and Iceland and access to Russia via the White Sea, which the Danish king also taxed, were issues under discussion. On the other side, the Danes complained about English pirates and about the confiscation of merchandise on suspicion of it being contraband on its way to Spain.

It was during this tense political climate that Dowland arrived in Copenhagen presumably as part of a delegation's retinue.[17] On 18 November 1598 he got his contract which reveals that he received an exceptionally high yearly salary of 500 daler, more than fifteen times that of an ordinary carpenter.[18] But contrary to normal practice, Dowland was not to receive compensation for board which usually amounted to approximately seven to ten daler per month in addition to free livery.[19] This implies that Dowland received special treatment: either he would have to pay out of his own pocket for board and livery or, just as plausibly, he was able to sit at the table together with the king's counselors and did not need a uniform as other musicians employed at court did.[20] He was one of the very few musicians who were able to gain access to the king's private chambers.

Since the political disputes remained unresolved, Cecil decided the following year to send a diplomat, Stephen Lesieur, to Copenhagen to lodge yet another protest, this time concerning some fishermen

[17] At least some trumpeters arrived in the retinue of the English delegation: according to the royal account books, Christian IV ordered the chancellor to pay them 100 daler. RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1598–1599', afd. 8, 9 July 1598. There are indications that Dowland was specifically sought for the position: in the account books it is mentioned that 'His Royal Majesty has graciously appointed and employs [bestillett och antager] Johann Doulande as a lutenist in the service of his Majesty', RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1599–1600', afd. 19, 18 August 1598.

[18] Cf. note 15. On the comparison of various salaries, see Møller 1981, p. 115.

[19] Robert Bosan, an English instrumentalist employed on the same day as Dowland, received 60 daler yearly in addition to seven daler a month for board (RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1599–1600', afd. 19, 7 September 1599), all in all 144 daler a year plus free livery. William Brade, an English violist, received 200 daler a year in addition to ten daler a month for board 'with the usual one free livery a year' (Ibid., 31 March 1600). The only other court musician not to receive free livery was the singer Johann Meinert. On musicians' salaries, board and livery: Hammerich 1892, pp. 201–223.

[20] Holman 1993, p. 47.

whom the Danish authorities had seized fishing quietly—according to the English—off the coasts of Norway and Iceland.[21] In his reports, Lesieur gives very detailed information about his journey, the proceedings and his meetings with the Danish king and his counselors just as Devereaux and Davison encouraged in their book. Unfortunately Lesieur does not mention Dowland, but, as not all events and details are mentioned in Lesieur's report, it is possible that he might have met the king's lutenist during his visit to Copenhagen.[22]

In 1602 the problems became so serious that the sovereigns finally agreed to try to settle the issues at a conference in Bremen. The negotiations started on 25 September but after two months of no progress at all, the Danish commissioners suddenly decided to leave, arguing that they had no authority to negotiate the fishing rights or tolls. The English delegation was taken by surprise, but remained in Bremen because of some other negotiations with the German emperor, Rudolph II. After having finished the reports for Elizabeth on 9 December, Lesieur finally wrote to Dowland explaining the situation and asking him to keep eyes and ears open:

> I shalbe very glad from tyme to tyme to heere from yow of as muche as may concerne her ma.^{stie} or her subiects, yt shall come to y^{r} knoledge, yow may saffely do it sending y^{r} Ltres to Pieterson at Lubeck, spare not any reasonable charge to do it for I will see yow repaid besides yt. I will make y^{r} true hart & seruice to her ma.^{stie} knowen to y^{r} good; therffore I pray satisfie me very particularly of what yow shall think worthie my knoledge for her ma.^{sties} seruice.[23]

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[21] See Lesieur's report in BL, Add. MS 48512, f. 110r. The incident is briefly mentioned in Rymer/Sanderson 1615, p. 483; it is also described in Sivert Grubbe's diary: Rørdam 1873.

[22] One of the things Lesieur 'forgot' to mention in the report was that he had received a gold chain and a plain portrait of Christian IV. Compare Lesieur's report, 'Declaration of the proceedings in my laste employm:t for her ma:tie service to Christean the 4:the Kinge of Denmarke', BL, Add. MS 48152, ff. 111v–116r, with the bookkeeper's entry in RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1599–1600'. Even if Dowland was very close to the inner circles, he was merely a musician and therefore ranked low in the official hierarchy of employees. In addition, it should be noted that Lesieur uses the formal 'you' and not the informal 'thou' when addressing Dowland.

[23] Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen (KBK), NKS 1305, 2^{0}. The letter mentions that Ruloff Pieterson was a merchant living in St Jans Gasse in Lübeck; he was often employed by the English government for procuring various items such as alchemical equipment. For a transcription of the letter and on the persons mentioned: Hauge 2001a.

Lesieur's request to Dowland somehow ended up in the archives of the king's secretary, Jonas Charisius, together with other private letters. Either the letter had been confiscated before Dowland received it, or Dowland himself handed it over to the authorities fearing what might happen if he provided Lesieur with the desired information. Perhaps the letter had been intercepted, even though Lesieur had sent it in a bundle with a special messenger who was to stay in the country until Dowland replied. A copy, titled 'Mr. D', was placed among all the official papers concerning the Bremen conference implying how seriously the Danish authorities regarded Lesieur's letter to Dowland.[24] In any case, the lutenist must have been subjected to some kind of questioning which does not seem, however, to have had any immediate consequences on his employment.

There is no evidence that Dowland was asked to procure information before this incident. It is possible that in 1598 he was encouraged by Cecil to accept the position as lutenist at the Danish court as Dowland's position might turn out to be handy if problems escalated. In spite of the high salary, it seems strange that he accepted the position, leaving his family behind, although he had already done so while traveling through Europe for years. However, it was not uncommon for the Elizabethan government to employ informants and spies by blackmailing them. Even convicted criminals sentenced to the Fleet were at times promised freedom if they would act as informants and spies. Dowland had certainly proven his worth as an informant when he posted the letter to Cecil about English Catholics in Rome. By sending Dowland abroad and detaining his wife and children in London, there was a great possibility that the lutenist would give in to shady requests. Had Dowland succeeded and achieved a satisfactory result in England's favor, he might have been allowed to return to London in the spring of 1603.

Alas, Elizabeth died in March 1603, and James VI of Scotland, who was to become King of England as James I, wrote immediately to Christian telling him the news. Though the controversies were not solved officially until 1621, the relationship between the two countries rapidly became relaxed and amicable, for James was married to Christian's sister Anne, and James and Christian were friends.

[24] RAK, TKUA, Alm. Del indtil 1676, 'Dr. Jonas Charisius Gesandtskabspapirer'. It is curious that the copyist decided only to write 'Mr. D' rather than 'Dowland'.

Dowland's hopes for a position at the English court vanished. He could not escape the services of the Danish king without offending him and would certainly not receive any help from James and Anne.

But Dowland was not only a possible informant or spy. When studying the treasurer's account books, it is clear that he often was sent abroad on business. A couple of years earlier (June 1601), after he had received a small portrait of the king made in crown gold and an advance of his salary until November that year, Dowland was ordered to travel to England to buy a case of viols or violins ('eenn kiste med Fioler'), an Irish harp and additional strings.[25] He was also to engage a harpist and a dancer for one year. Just before he left, the customs at Elsinore were instructed to pay Dowland 300 daler towards expenses he might incur such as board and travel.[26] While in England, Dowland also bought several pairs of 'English gloves' for the royal couple, strings for the king's tennis racket, and lute strings as well as a golden cord for the king's lute.[27] In October 1601, Dowland engaged Henry Sandon, a

[25] For the small portrait: RAK (Udg. konto nr. 7 [C.d.]), 'Bilag til Rentemesterregnskaber, 1601–1602' and for the salary 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1600–1601', afd. 17, 6 June 1601.

[26] RAK, Danske Kancelli, Sjællandske Tegnelser, 5 September 1601.

[27] RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab 1603–1604', afd. 23 (Adschillige Vdgifft Anno 1603), 16 July 1603: 'effter Maijtts: eigenne Naadigste befalling, Igengiffuenn och fornøigedt Johannes Dowlannd, Konngl: M: Luttennist. Som hand paa høigbemeldte Konngl: Maijtts: veigenne, aff sinne eigenne Pendinge vnderdanigst Haffde fortragt och vdgiffuen, till Lunden vdj Engellannd, Først—j[re] xl. dallr Som hannd haffuer giffuen, eenn Harpslager, och eenn Dandzsmester, Hannd dersammestedzs, effter Konngl: Maijtts: Naadigste befalling, haffuer bestillidt och Antagen, vdj hanns Maijtts: thienneste, paa regenschaff, aff derris tillkommende Lønn och Besolding, som ochsaa med dennum, her vdj Konngl: Maijtts: Rente Cammer, er bleffuen kortidt och Affregnit, Item, giffuedt for eenn Deell Engelske Handsker, Hannd Haffuer Indkiøfft, till Konngl: Maijtts: och hanns Maijtts: kierre Elske: Gemahell Høigborne førstinde Dronning Anna Catherina—Lxxij dr, For Rackete Strennge—xv dall, for eenn kiste med Fioler—j[re] ij daller, Och xx dall til Omkostening, som paa for: kiste er opgangen, alt offuerføre, der fraa Engelland her Innd vdj Riigedt till Konngl: Maijtts: Dißligest, for eenn Irisch Harpe, med Strennge der till—j[re] iiij dallr, dernest, for huis fortering, for: Johann Doulannd, sampt for: Harpeslager, och Dandzsmester, Haffuer giordt, paa reigsen, fraa Engellannd her vdj Riigedt—j[re] dallr, Saa och for Luten Strennge, och eenn Guldsnor, omkring Konngl: Maijtts: Lutte—iij dallr, Saa Hanns gandsche vdgifft beløffuer, effter som forschreffuid staar—v[re] vj dallr, effter Hoesliggende hanns der paa Offuergiffuenne Register och forteignelßis formelding som aff Konngl: Maijtts: sielffued Naadigst, er vederschreffuen, Emod huilcken forschreffuenne, hanns vdgifft, Hannd paa Konngl: Maijtts: weigenne, Haffde Optagenn, der till Lunden vdj Engelland, paa wechsell—Aff eenn deell Engelske kiøbmand, som kaldis, dett Mellsingsche Companej—ij[re] Lxxxix dallr, Saa hannum, aff Konngl: Maijtts: effter dennd Leijlighied, paa denne Affregning

dancer, whose salary was to be 300 daler; two weeks later the harpist, Charles O'Reilly, presumably an Irishman, was engaged and was to get 200 daler. In addition to the one-year agreement, Dowland promised them a pension of ten daler a month, which he seems to have negotiated independently with the musician and dancer without the king's knowledge. He bought the instrument for the harpist which was therefore to remain the property of the king. Unfortunately, Dowland did not have enough money so he had to obtain a bill of exchange from English merchants of the 'Mellsingsche' company corresponding to approximately 289 daler. All three remained in England during winter, arriving in Copenhagen in May 1602; at the same time, Stephen Lesieur, who had written the letter to Dowland asking for information, also arrived in Copenhagen, and on 29 May he delivered a letter from Elizabeth to Christian.[28] It is possible that all four traveled together from London. By mid-June, the recently employed harpist and dancer registered with the official authorities and both received a contract. And as was the custom, shortly after his return to Copenhagen, Dowland most likely handed over the case of viols or violins to a silversmith,

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haffuer till kommidt, som Hannum nu, her aff hanns Maijtts: Rente Cammer, er bleffuenn erlaugdt och Affbetallidt, som forbemeldt er ij^{re} xvij Dr.–', ['According to His Majesty's own most gracious command, returned and satisfied John Dowland, His Royal Majesty's lutenist, who on behalf of his said Royal Highness out of his own purse most humbly had taken with him and spent in London in England; first, 140 daler which he has given to a harp-player and a dance-master whom at that place [*i.e.* London] he has according His Royal Majesty's most gracious command appointed and employed in the services of his Majesty on account of their future salary and board which also has been given them and settled here in His Royal Majesty's public treasury a short while ago; also given for some English gloves, which he has purchased for his Royal Majesty and for His Royal Majesty's beloved wife, the high-born princess Queen Anna Catharina: 72 daler; for racket strings: 15 daler; for a case of viols [or violins]: 102 daler; and 20 daler for expenses which arose from transferring the mentioned case from England to this kingdom to His Royal Majesty; furthermore, for an Irish harp and extra strings: 104 daler; then for the board of the mentioned John Dowland and the aforementioned harp-player and dance-master which they have spent on the travel from England to this kingdom: 100 daler; also for lute strings and a golden cord around His Royal Majesty's lute: 3 daler; thus his expenses amount to in total as written above: 506 daler in accordance with the handed in statement and list which is signed by His most gracious Royal Majesty himself. Against his above-mentioned expenses which he on His Royal Majesty's behalf has raised on a bill of exchange in London in England (from some English merchants which are called the 'Mellsingsche Company'): 289 daler; thus on this occasion he has now according to this settlement of accounts received what he by His Royal Majesty's public treasury has been disbursed and paid as above mentioned: 217 daler'.]

[28] Rymer/Sanderson 1615, pp. 440–441.

who ornamented the instruments with the king's monogram.[29] Since the one-year contract terminated in September 1602, less than five months after their arrival, Sandon and O'Reilly were dismissed from service. The following month, Sandon, who had already received part of his salary and pension through Dowland, was discharged. Two weeks later, O'Reilly received his final payment through Dowland and left the court. Dowland was reimbursed more than 200 daler. Surprisingly, he was not compensated until a year and a half after the expenditure had been incurred, so either he was indeed well off or he must have struggled terribly to survive.[30] All in all, Dowland had spent nearly 800 daler on his travel to London, an amount that corresponded to the yearly salary of 25 carpenters. Though there is no direct evidence, the records imply that the harpist and dancer were employed for a specific occasion which took place sometime during the summer of 1602. It is likely that they participated in the festivities in connection with the king's younger brother Duke Hans' preparations for the progress to Russia where he was to marry Xenia, daughter of Zar Borís Godunóv. Christian might even have planned that Sandon and O'Reilly were to follow the duke to Russia but perhaps neither were keen on the idea.[31]

Though quite a few musicians were employed as agents and sent abroad, we know of no one else who handled such large sums of money as Dowland did. In this connection, another incident is also important, as it reveals interesting details relating to Dowland and his family. In August 1600 the king's ship trumpeter, Johannes Bagster, was sent to London in order to engage English trumpeters.[32] Bagster

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[29] RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1601–1602,' afd. 13, 1 May 1601, 8 July 1601, 15 August 1601, 4 November 1601, 14 November 1601, 9 January 1602, 6 February 1602 and 20 April 1602; RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1602–1603', afd. 14, 24 August 1602.

[30] It is possible Dowland may have been in debt, as his salary was paid in advance; however, he did have a family in London to take care of. Cf. Poulton 1982, pp. 63–64. Dowland was finally reimbursed on 10 July 1603 (see above note 25), that is on the same day as an English delegation left Copenhagen; the English trumpeters who were in the retinue also received a gratuity. RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1603–1604', afd. 8, 16 July 1603.

[31] See Hammerich 1892, p. 29. Duke Hans left for Russia in August 1602.

[32] Bagster was presumably of English origin since he signed his name as 'John Baxter' thus proving that contrary to many of his fellow trumpeters employed at the court he could read and write. RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab', udgiftsbilag til rentemesterregnskab, 1600–1601 (Udg. konto nr. 7), 21 November 1600.

soon reached an agreement with five new trumpeters.[33] Before he set out for London, he received thirty daler towards travel expenses, boat rental, board and payment of the musicians. The amount, which is in sharp contrast to the 300 daler Dowland was to receive in 1601, was apparently not enough as he had to borrow money from various persons in London. Thus, the entry in the royal account books states that on 16 October 1600 when he returned to Copenhagen, the bookkeeper had

> entrusted to Johann Bagster, His Royal Majesty's ship trumpeter, who, on his said Royal Majesty's behalf, again shall perform and give to Johan Stockis and master Lamb of London in England, also to master John Dowland (His Royal Majesty's lutenist) his wife the mentioned money he had borrowed and lent of them in England. And which money then was given in the hands of the five English trumpeters, whom he according to His Royal Majesty's gracious command in the present year 1600 in England has appointed and accepted in the service of His Royal Majesty. Likewise, due are the expenses for board, rent of boat as well as other essentials and needs in England and on the return from there to the kingdom with the mentioned five trumpeters, except the 30 daler that he was given for these needs in July month last in the present year 1600 by His Royal Majesty's own chamber [i.e. his private purse]. Given according to his returned and signed statement. [In left margin: 130 daler].[34]

In addition to the usual lending from merchants, Bagster had found it necessary to borrow money from Dowland's wife. All in all, the trum-

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[33] Thomas Knodd, Edward Lorentz, John Gudinn, Matthew and Arthur Bateman. The latter two were presumably brothers and perhaps somehow connected with Robert Bateman, who was a member of the Company of Musicians playing the violin and viol, or Mark Bateman, a trumpeter employed at the English court. Cf. Sadie/Tyrrell 2001, 'Bateman, Mark'.

[34] RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1600–1601', afd. 5, 16 October 1600: 'Samme Dag [*i.e.* 16 October 1600] dllr Antuordett Johann Bagster Konn: Maietts: Schifftrommetter, som hannd Paa Hogbemelte Konn: Maietts: Weignne igien skal forrette och Wdgiffue til Johan Stockis og Mester Lamb aff Lunden wdj Engeland, Saa och till Mester Johannes Dowlandt Konn: M[aietts]: Lutenist, hans Høstrue, Huilcke for:ne penninge, hand haffde Laannt och optagen aff dennum der Wdj Enngelland, Och samme Penninge igienn Wdgiffuen till dee 5. Engelske Trommetter, Paa Haanden, som hand effter Konn: Maietts: Naadigste befalling, wdj nerwerrendis Aar. 1600. derudj Engelland, haffuer bestellid och Anthagen Wdj Konn: Maietts: tienneste. Sammeledis som er Opgangen till fortering, shiffsleige och ellers Anden Nodtrufft och behouff, der wdj Engelland, Och paa hiembreigsen der fraa, med for:ne 5. Trommetter, herinnd wdj Rigett igien, widere end dee xxx dllr, som hannum till dis behouff, wdj Julii maanid nest forledenn, wdj nerwerrendis Aar. 1600. aff Konn: Maietts: eegid Cammers, er bleffuen tillstillid och offuerantwordett, effter hans Offuergiffne och Vnnderschreffne Registers formelding. [In left margin: j^{re}xxx Dllr.]'.

peter had to lend and borrow around 130 daler which corresponded to Bagster's yearly salary. But why did he borrow money from Dowland's wife? He could have asked the king's debtor John Stokes for a larger loan or done as Dowland was to do in 1601: obtain a bill of exchange. Just before Bagster left Copenhagen, Dowland finished and signed the printing manuscript for his *Second Booke of Songs and Ayres*, and it is tempting to suggest that Bagster brought it with him, delivering it to Dowland's wife. Shortly after, she sold it to the publisher George Eastland for £20.[35] Bagster may have received the proceedings from Mrs. Dowland to bring the money to her husband. Unfortunately, Bagster found it necessary to use the money in order to cover expenses, and hence owed Dowland money. It should be emphasized, however, that the entry in the account book mentions that Bagster had to return the money *specifically* to Dowland's wife and *not* to her husband: 'give (…) also to master John Dowland (His Royal Majesty's lutenist) his wife the mentioned money he had borrowed and lent'.

Dowland's position as an agent as well as a musician is not unique: the royal account books reveal many examples of foreign musicians employed at court receiving orders to travel abroad, usually to their native country, in order to buy instruments and engage new colleagues.[36] But it is the large sums of money entrusted to Dowland that reveal his special position at the Danish court, and also the fact that he bought (or was asked to buy) gifts for the royal couple. Christian IV must somehow have been absolutely sure that Dowland would not have been tempted by the large sums of money and abscond with it from the Danish court. It would not have been the first time that musicians decided to flee the services of the Chapel Royal.[37]

Did all these different assignments have any influence on Dowland, the composer? While in Denmark, Dowland published two books of lute songs (1600 and 1603). Presumably in order to maintain his

[35] Dowland 1600. The amount is known because of a lawsuit between the publisher, Eastland, and the printer, Thomas East. See Dowling 1932. A summary in Poulton 1982, pp. 245–247.

[36] For other examples: Spohr 2009.

[37] Dowland might have remembered the king's furious reaction when the singer Johan Meinert (John Mynors or John Maynard?), who had access to the private chambers, decided to abscond together with the violist Daniel Norcombe. Christian sent agents throughout the whole of Europe in order to force them back into service yet without great success; cf. Hammerich 1892, pp. 26–28.

English connections, he decided to have the lute songs published in London and not Copenhagen; also, it probably would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find a printer in Copenhagen who could manage the complex setting of the music and have the necessary music types. In addition, the books of lute songs are clearly addressing an English audience and not a Danish one, nor is a single item in the lute song collections dedicated to his employer, Christian IV, which seems strange as it is highly likely that the king would have paid for the dedication and the publication of a volume of music or even just one of the lute songs.[38] During the period 1602–1603 when the political disputes between England and Denmark escalated, ending with the Danes leaving the negotiations in Bremen in December 1602, Dowland was working on what was to become his most acclaimed and puzzling collection of music, his *Lachrimæ, or Seaven Teares Figured in Seaven Passionate Pavans*. In the summer of 1603, James I had 'apoynted therlle of Ruttland to goe Ambasodor to the King of Denmarke, who did invite our King to be godfather to a sonne Wch God haith sent the queene of Denmarke'.[39] Besides the Earl of Rutland, William Segar and Inigo Jones were also attending the baptism.[40] Following the festivities in August Dowland received permission to travel to England 'on private business'.[41] When in England he went to Winchester where the royal couple was staying due to the plague raging in London at the time. He presented the volume of music and presumably received a gratuity towards printing expenses.

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[38] The lute songs are in English, a language which was very rarely spoken or even understood in Denmark at that time; the subjects of the poetry are clearly addressing an English audience.

[39] BL, Stowe MS 150, f. 188; RAK, TKUA, England AII, breve nr. 195–196, a letter from 1603 and 1604.

[40] On Inigo Jones: Wade 1996, pp. 47–49. Some of the names of the English participants are also mentioned in Rørdam 1878, p. 17; cf. KBK, MS Uldall. 449, 4°, f. 147r. See also Harrison 1941, pp. 54–55. On 15 July 1603, the day before the English delegation left, Dowland received his salary in advance implying that he had permission to travel; perhaps he left together with the English guests. On the same day Dowland was finally reimbursed for the expenses incurred during his trip nearly two years earlier (see above). Note that it was during the festivities in connection with the baptism and the king receiving the Order of the Garter that Dowland received payment and was reimbursed. It is possible that Dowland asked the English delegation to intervene on his behalf.

[41] RAK, 'Rentemesterregnskab, 1604–1605', afd. 19, 10 July 1604: 'hannd haffuer werridt forreigsedt till Englland, vdj hans eigenn Werffue, och bestillinng'.

In the Latin epigram of *Lachrimæ, or Seaven Teares*, Queen Anne, to whom he dedicated the volume, is compared to Juno in power, Minerva in wisdom and Venus in beauty—the implication of which was that the queen exceeded all three goddesses in their respective virtues.[42] However, it should be noted that this allegorical conceit was associated with Elizabeth during her reign and often found in literature and paintings: Richard Barnfield explains in his *Cynthia* of 1595 the classical story of 'the Judgment of Paris' and the golden apple which Paris awarded to Venus ultimately bringing ruin upon Troy. But the author has changed the story so that the most beautiful goddess to receive the gift is neither Minerva, Juno, nor Venus but Elizabeth.[43] In addition, a painting of 1569, attributed to Joris Hoefnagel, presents a similar theme. It depicts the queen attended by two ladies-in-waiting on the left side, and Juno, Minerva and Venus with their particular attributes placed on the right. Beneath the picture on the frame, a short Latin epigram explains that the queen surpasses all three goddesses in virtue.[44] Thus, Dowland has employed an allegory associated with Elizabeth and transferred it to the new queen, Anne. Does this suggest that the original dedicatee of the volume was to have been Elizabeth and not Anne?

Studying the overall structure of the *Lachrimæ, or Seaven Teares*, it is evident that the titles of the twenty-one pieces imply a very conscious arrangement (see Table 1): the *King of Denmarks Galiard*—originally known as the 'Battle Galliard'—is the center of the whole collection, surrounded by ten pieces on either side.[45]

The collection can also be divided into three sections, each containing seven pieces—the center of the middle section is still the *King of Denmarks Galiard*. Looking at the titles of rank in the middle section, another pattern emerges: from number eleven, which is the center with the highest rank ('king'), they descend in importance (ten-nine-eight and twelve-thirteen-fourteen) so that the outer movements (numbers eight and fourteen) have the lowest rank. The placement of Mr. John Langton seems to contradict the descending order; however, records

[42] Dowland 1604, title page verso, epigram. For further references and a detailed study of the *Lachrimæ*: Hauge 2001b. For other interpretations: Holman 1999, pp. 36–74, and Pinto 1997.

[43] Barnfield 1595, pp. 49–55.

[44] For a more detailed description of the painting: Strong 1987, pp. 65–66.

[45] On the names: Holman 1999, pp. 65–74; for an interpretation of the position of the seven pavans: Hauge 2001b, pp. 15–36.

Table 1. Contents of John Dowland's collection of consort music, *Lachrimæ or Seaven Teares* (London [1604]).

Collection dedicated to Queen Anne	1	Lachrimae Antiquæ
	2	Lachrimae Antiqæ Novæ
	3	Lachrimæ Gementes
	4	Lachrimæ Tristes
	5	Lachrimæ Coactæ
	6	Lachrimæ Amantes
	7	Lachrimæ Veræ
	8	Semper Dowland Sepmer Dolens
	9	Sir John Umptons Funerall
	10	M. John Langtons Pavan
	11	The King of Denmarks Galiard
	12	The Earle of Essex Galiard
	13	Sir John Souch his Galiard
	14	M. Henry Noell his Galiard
	15	M. Giles Hoby his Galiard
	16	M. Nicho. Gryffith his Galliard
	17	M. Thomas Collier his Galliard
	18	Captaine Piper his Galiard
	19	M. Bucton his Galiard
	20	M^{rs}. Nichols Almand
	21	M. George Whitehead his Almand

show that James I had already knighted him in June 1603, and, since Dowland arrived in England in September, he would have known Langton's correct title and rank.[46] 'Mister' is most likely an editorial blunder. 'Captaine Piper' is placed in the centre of the third section among the ordinary 'misters' and the single 'mistress'. The structure of the collection might be compared to the popular notion of the universe, that is, the relation between macro- and microcosm. The sections correspond to the division of the universe into three realms: the first is the super-celestial sphere above the planets (corresponding to the seven pavans), the middle section with the king as the center corresponds to the planets according to which King Christian is Apollo,[47] and the lowest and indeed most inferior section with Captain Piper in the center corresponds to the terrestrial world which was considered corrupt and inconstant, enveloped in darkness and ignorance (see Table 2).

The three part division may explain why so little is known about most of the dedicatees of the lowest section. Digory Piper was among the most notorious of pirates capturing, among others, Danish vessels, and had been one of the original causes of the disputes between England and Denmark.[48] Christian IV, placed in the planetary sphere as a symbol of Apollo, the guardian and leader of the nine muses on Mount Parnassus, is thus in complete contrast to the malicious enemy of Denmark, Captain Piper, clearly emphasizing the difference between the two realms.

Keeping in mind Lesieur's letter promising Dowland some kind of reward and introduction to Elizabeth in December 1602 if he succeeded in procuring the desired information, it is tempting to suggest that the *Lachrimæ, or seaven teares*, was originally conceived as an important part of Dowland's endeavors to lobby for a post at Elizabeth's court, not Anne's. The severe disputes between Denmark and England and a possible dedication of the entire volume to Elizabeth underlines the hierarchy with Christian IV—*Battle Galliard*—in a position inferior to

[46] Shaw 1906, p. 111; Langton's title is correct in Dowland 1610, f. K1v.

[47] It is tempting to suggest that piece no. 8, 'Semper Dowland semper dolens' ('Always Dowland always pain') is thus appropriately under the influence of Saturn and closely linked with the concept of melancholy: Hauge 2006.

[48] Some of the other pirates were Blackadder and Thomas Clarick; Piper caused so much frustration that Frederik II wrote to Elizabeth complaining and seeking recompense: Macray 1885, app. 2 no. 1, p. 29; Poulton 1982, pp. 423–425; Ward 1977, p. 59. See also Macray 1886.

Table 2. The correspondence between the titles of the movements and the various sections of the Macrocosm.

The seven *Lachrimæ* pavans correspond to the supercelestial sphere above the planets believed to be constant, orderly, and eternal:	1	Lachrimae Antiquæ
	2	Lachrimae Antiqæ Novæ
	3	Lachrimæ Gementes
	4	Lachrimæ Tristes
	5	Lachrimæ Coactæ
	6	Lachrimæ Amantes
	7	Lachrimæ Veræ
The titles of address correspond to the planets; King Christian, Downland's patron, is Apollo:	8	Semper Dowland Semper Dolens
	9	Sir John Umptons Funerall
	10	M. John Langtons Pavan
	11	The King of Denmarks Galiard
	12	The Earle of Essex Galiard
	13	Sir John Souch his Galiard
	14	M. Henry Noell his Galiard
These correspond to the terrestial and inferior world, described as inconstant and corrupt:	15	M. Giles Hoby his Galiard
	16	M. Nicho. Gryffith his Galiard
	17	M. Thomas Collier his Galiard
	18	Captaine Piper his Galiard
	19	M. Bucton his Galiard
	20	M^{rs}. Nichols Almand
	21	M. George Whitehead his Almand

that of the English queen, and Captain Piper—*the pirate*—placed in an even lower one. Though the Danish King is the center of the volume, it is Elizabeth who presides over the collection, embracing the 21 pieces. Unfortunately, the queen died in February 1603 and Dowland had to find another dedicatee, the most obvious substitute being Anne of Denmark. On the accession of James and Anne, ties between England and Denmark became cordial with the exchanging of various gifts such as bloodhounds and falcons, and Christian receiving the Order of the Garter. Under those circumstances it would have been quite unrealistic for Dowland to petition actively for a position as lutenist at the new English court without offending his Danish employer. Had Elizabeth been alive, and considering the continuing disputes, the matter might very well have been resolved completely differently and in Dowland's favor.

Though Dowland is mainly known today for his music, it is clear that his assignments at the Danish court were manifold: not only was he a lutenist and a composer, but he was also active as an agent, procuring goods and even representing the king in matters concerning the employment of new court musicians. While in Denmark, he was approached by a representative of Elizabeth's government, Stephen Lesieur, requesting information on the political climate and discussions between Christian IV and his counselors, though there is no proof that he responded to their request. At least he was considered to be so close to the coveted sources of information that he was worth approaching. Working as an agent traveling to England, Dowland was entrusted with large sums of money indicating that the Danish authorities and the king must have found him absolutely reliable.

The romantic notion that court musicians made a living solely by performing and composing is misleading when dealing with the Renaissance and early Baroque periods. It is usually these creative aspects of their employment which are emphasized in modern dictionaries and biographies; however, it is clear that court musicians might also have had several other assignments such as informant, spy and agent, depending on their qualifications. Looking merely at the musical aspects of their lives reveals an incomplete picture, disregarding the social and cultural context beyond their musical activity. The composer continuously sought to promote himself by approaching possible dedicatees that might support him if necessary, and it is therefore

tempting to interpret Dowland's famous *Lachrimæ, or Seaven Teares* as a cunning plan for lobbying for a post at Elizabeth's court (the dedication to Anne merely due to the unfortunate death of Elizabeth). A composer of the early seventeenth-century seldom composed music for its own sake but as part of his 'networking', seeking the benefits of interested patrons.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TRAVELS OF A COURT JESTER: GONZALO DE LIAÑO, ART AGENT AT THE COURT OF KING PHILIP II OF SPAIN

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In the course of the sixteenth century, enthusiasm for collecting assumed thitherto unknown proportions in Europe. Princes and aristocrats, but also members of the intellectual elite, set up art cabinets, *studioli, Wunderkammern* and galleries in their residences, often accumulating sumptuous treasuries. While the art cabinets of the previous centuries had not really respected any precise order, collectors now selected their items corresponding to determinate criteria, and built architectonic structures destined to hold their treasures. The *artificialia* included paintings, modern and antique sculptures, as well as a great variety of precious and rare handcrafted objects made of gold, ivory, rock crystal or semi-precious stones and other valuable materials. Among the *naturalia* there were all kinds of curiosities from the realm of plants, animals, and minerals. Courtly collections not only served to enhance the prince's private delight, but also fulfilled highly representative functions. The acquisition of precious pieces for many rulers became an issue of increasing importance. Not all of the items were specially purchased or commissioned for the collections; many of them came to the various courts as diplomatic gifts. Thus, each European collection became part of an international network for the exchange of artworks, rare objects, curiosities and luxury articles.[1]

The art agent's profession developed alongside the emergence of these novel requirements, as Europe's rulers employed able middlemen to advise them on the purchase and procurement from abroad of precious collectors' items. Several attempts have been made to trace the history of the European art market back to its origins. The Florentine Battista della Palla (1489–1527) who, following Vasari, acted as an art agent to King Francis I, has been characterized as an 'art dealer in

[1] See also chapter 1 in this volume.

the fullest and truest sense' and as a 'professional middleman'.[2] In a similar way, Jacopo Strada who, from the 1560s onwards, was active on behalf of Duke Albrecht II of Bavaria, Emperor Ferdinand I, and Rudolf II, has also been defined as the prototypical figure of the art dealer.[3] However, more recent scholarly contributions have smoothed these views. On the basis of documentary evidence, Caroline Elam has shown that Battista della Palla's activities as 'purveyor of works of art' were less significant than assumed. She underlines that it is instead 'the particular mix of art, ideology and politics involved in his career that make him a figure of outstanding interest'.[4] The same is true for Jacopo Strada who also performed multiple roles. Titian has portrayed him as a wealthy antiquarian and he certainly acted as an intermediary for many princes, but he was also an art collector himself and worked as an architect and possibly as a painter.[5] Figures such as Battista della Palla and Jacopo Strada have certainly contributed to the modern understanding of the art dealer, but on the whole they show that professionalization and specialization at the time were only just beginning. Both can be defined as 'double agents' who, next to their political, administrative or diplomatic roles, also acted as cultural brokers.[6] Most rulers took advantage of their international diplomatic relations and entrusted ambassadors, envoys and other court representatives with the procurement of antiquities, works of art and other objects for their collections.

This was also the case of the Spanish King Philip II who was not only the most powerful ruler of his time, but also one of the greatest art collectors. The Catholic monarch had a particular passion for Italian art and culture and resolved to decorate the newly built Escorial entirely *all'italiana*, commissioning impressive altar pieces and mural fresco paintings. Philip's art patronage and collecting practices are well known, but much research remains to be done regarding his strategies of acquisition where his diplomatic resources in Italy and other countries played an important role.[7] Spanish ambassadors and highly

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[2] Wackernagel 1981, pp. 283–285; Wackernagel 1936, p. 278. Both definitions also quoted by Elam 1993, p. 34.
[3] Jansen 1987, p. 11.
[4] Elam 1993, p. 35.
[5] Jansen 1991.
[6] Cools/Keblusek/Noldus 2006.
[7] Checa Cremades 1993 and Mulcahy 2004 are the most complete works on Philip II as a patron.

ranked diplomats, but also local agents, were involved in commissioning and buying works of art and devotional objects on behalf of his Majesty and in offering him artistic advice. As Italian residents, they came to know the local art scene very well and could easily establish contacts to painters, sculptors and architects. In 1578, for example, the Spanish ambassador to Rome, Juan de Zúñiga, sent a detailed report to Philip II about the names and the quality of the various painters living in Rome in that period.[8] On the other hand, diplomats also had easy access to local merchants from whom finished manufactured items and antiquities could be bought. Several recent research contributions have demonstrated how agents based in Italy were—apart from their administrative duties—actively occupied in the acquisition of precious Italian objects.[9] Next to being commissioned and purchased, collectors' items could also be obtained as diplomatic gifts. These were not always voluntarily offered to the Spanish court, but often immodestly requested from members of the Italian aristocracy and clergy by means of the royal agents.

An important figure for the cultural exchange between Florence and Spain under Philip II seems to have been Baltasar Suárez. He was a Portuguese merchant based in Florence and maintained very close ties to the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the King of Spain.[10] Suárez was in fact a Knight of the Order of Santo Stefano, Balí of Florence and, more importantly, consul of the Spanish Nation in the city. The Granducal Medici Archive preserves abundant documentation about his diplomatic tasks, but also about his role as a purveyor of works of art and luxury articles in the service of the Medici and Philip II.[11] He was probably a collector himself and commissioned two marble *tondo* portraits of his wife and himself, attributed today to Giovanni Battista Caccini.[12] While further research deserves to be done, the documentation already proves that he was engaged with Italian and Spanish agents

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[8] Checa Cremades 1998, p. 25.

[9] Anselmi 2000, pp. 115–120; Cruz de Carlos 2003.

[10] For Suárez as a merchant see Braudel 1966, vol. 1, pp. 245, 345, 452 and 577; vol. 2, p. 71; for the correspondence between Simón Ruiz and Baltasar Suárez see Ruiz Martin 1965.

[11] Cf. for example Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF), Mediceo del Principato (MDP) 241, f. 107, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to the Ufficiali del Monte di Pietà di Firenze, 1 Sept. 1573; ASF, MDP 5151, ins. 1, f. 86, Giovanni de' Medici (Antwerpen) to Ferdinando I de' Medici, 2 April 1588; ASF, MDP 2940, without no., Gonzalo de Liaño (Mantua) to Ferdinando I de' Medici, 5 May 1588.

[12] Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio.

in art matters and had a special relation with one of Philip II's most curious servants, the court jester and *portero de cámara* (Gentleman of the Bedchamber) Gonzalo de Liaño.[13]

Although no documents are available explicitly to support the assumption, the circumstantial evidence allows us to believe that Gonzalo de Liaño was in fact a dwarf. The diminutive version of his name, Gonzalillo (*i.e.* little Gonzalo), as well as his denomination as 'buon huomaccino' (*i.e.* good little man) and as 'gran criado de su Magestad Católica' (*i.e.* great servant of His Catholic Majesty) in two letters, suggest a small stature.[14] A further indication of his appearance, as supported by numerous references in a range of sources, is also suggested by his intimate friendship with other dwarves and jesters at the Spanish court, including Magdalena Ruiz, known as Madalenica, and Nicolás Castellanos, known as Arandilla.[15] From 1579 to 1588, the year of his death, Gonzalo de Liaño traveled to Italy as frequently as five times on behalf of Philip II. His destinations included Genoa, Turin, Venice, Mantua, Bologna, Livorno, Rome, and, above all, Florence where he passed particularly extended periods of time at the court of the Medici.

At this time, the Tuscan and Spanish courts maintained friendly contacts and pursued lively diplomatic exchanges. The Medici had political, economic, religious and cultural interests in keeping up their alliance with the Spanish world power and their marital policy was intended to promote these interests appropriately. Grand Duke Cosimo I de' Medici had married a Spaniard, Eleonora de Toledo. He agreed that his sons, too, would only enter into matrimonial alliances

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[13] Gonzalo de Liaño mentions Suárez in numerous letters, sometimes calling him his 'agent', cf. ASF, MDP 5943, f. 605, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Bianca Cappello, 16 Oct. 1586. In 1587 Suárez was ordered to pay 400 ducats (4000 reales) to an artist in Rome whom Gonzalo had commissioned to paint 400 portraits most probably for the King of Spain, ASF, MDP 785, f.102, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Francesco I, Madrid, 10 January 1587; cf. also Herklotz 2009.

[14] ASF, MDP 5113, vol. 2, f. 558v., Giulio Battaglini (Monzón) to Piero Usimbardi, 25 August 1585; Universitätsbibliothek Wien, Ms./II 409, Correspondence Hans Khevenhüller, Hans Khevenhüller to Maria of Spain, f. 102 r., see Bouza 2005, p. 125, n.297. In his note Fernando Bouza also suggests that Gonzalo was a dwarf.

[15] Cf. for instance ASF, MDP 779, f. 640, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Arandilla, 2 November 1585 and MDP 773, f. 3, Gonzalo de Liaño (Barcelona) to Francesco I de' Medici, 30 May 1585 and MDP 781, f. 126, Gonzalo de Liaño (Monzón) to Francesco I de' Medici, 24 August 1585.

with the consent of the Spanish crown. Cosimo's successor Francesco I de' Medici was keen to keep good relations with Spain, since even the retention of his title as Grand Duke of Tuscany depended on the decision of the Spanish monarch. Exchanging diplomatic gifts was an important element in the relations of the two courts: works of art, luxury goods and devotional items were sent in large quantities from Italy to Spain, while the gifts sent in the opposite direction consisted mainly of import goods from the Spanish colonies such as rare animals and plants, curious manufacts and other *exotica*. The gifts exchanged in either way served to strengthen the political alliance and were to emphasize loyalty and mutual respect, although they also followed real representational and power strategies.[16] In 1607, in a letter to his ambassador, Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, successor to Francesco I, pertinently summarized the practice of giving and receiving gifts and the associated intentions: 'we don't give gifts for the sake of magnanimity, but out of self-interest and to those who render us services'.[17] Strict and unwritten rules of social protocol governed the selection, offering and subsequent reciprocal bestowal of diplomatic gifts. The correspondence between the Medici and Spanish courts shows that the practice of giving gifts held an extremely high status within the courts' communications and was frequently linked to reversals of diplomatic strategies. It was not easy to select the appropriate item in every case, since all gifts had to be suitable, not merely in terms of their value and size, but also in respect of the rank of both giver and receiver. The numerous artworks, luxury items and valuable objects, which the Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici sent to Spain, were meant to be a mirror image of princely *liberalitas* and *magnificentia* and, at the same time, were also to respect hierarchy in Spanish court circles.[18]

In the 1580s, Philip II used his court jester Gonzalo de Liaño in order to facilitate the smooth mediation and transfer of diplomatic gifts between Italy and Spain. Gonzalillo's extensive correspondence sheds light on his method of work as a middleman and on the social network in which he moved. Even though Gonzalo was a jester and

[16] On diplomatic gifts between the Medici and Spanish court under Philip III see Goldberg 1996.

[17] ' (…) non si ha a donare per magnanimità ma per interesse et a chi ci fa de' servizi', ASF, MDP 5050, f. 543, Ferdinando I de' Medici to Sallustio Tarugi, 30 July 1607. Letter quoted in Goldberg 1996, p. 107.

[18] On the princely virtues of *liberalitas* and *magnificentia* see Falcke 2006, pp. 54–66; Guerzoni 1999.

possibly a dwarf, the king considered him qualified enough to unofficially undertake the duties of an informant and cultural broker. It seems reasonable to think that Philip II was taking advantage of the curious personality and appearance of Gonzalo to carry on different tasks in Italy while his diplomats were active in the same endeavors. This sort of strategy is consistent with the perception of the time for dwarfs, fools and jesters in the Spanish and other European courts where these individuals had access and were happily welcomed within the highest ranks of the society.

The Archivio Mediceo del Principato in the Florence State Archives holds about 150 of Gonzalillo's letters, which offer a fascinating picture of his personality. Most of these documents are addressed to the then reigning Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici, his wife Bianca Cappello or his brother Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici. The letters are written by differing hands; only Gonzalo de Liaño's large, clumsy signature is the same in all documents (Fig. 14). This suggests that he was personally unable to write and had to dictate his letters possibly because of physical restrictions. This explains why, during his last trip to Italy, Gonzalo was traveling in the company of a secretary, Fray Pedro González, probably a Dominican friar.[19] A closer inspection of the documents reveals, above all, the notable and extremely personal tone in which Gonzalillo addressed the Grand Duke. By contrast with the customary salutatory address, Gonzalillo adopts a simple 'Serenissimo Granduca y especial amigo' (Most Serene Grand Duke and special friend).[20] The text of the letters is stylistically closer to informal colloquial speech than to the official literary language of the time. The cheerful, anecdotal and often highly personal content of the letters defines Gonzalillo's burlesque personality that allowed him to cultivate intimate and friendly relations with the Medici and other members of the Italian aristocracy.

In the late sixteenth century, virtually every European prince and even many aristocrats and clerics kept jesters, dwarves and other entertainers in their households. Physically abnormal people were regarded

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[19] ASF, MDP 798, f. 683, Pedro González (Venice) to Ferdinando I de' Medici, 10 June, 1588. In this letter Pedro González reports that he is staying in the Venetian church and Domenican convent of San Giovanni e Paolo.

[20] This phrase or similar is found in numerous letters, cf. for example ASF, MDP 760, f. 43, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici, 28 March 1583.

as curiosities and studied with downright scientific interest. The mentally and physically handicapped contributed to the court's amusement and entertainment, but their unusual appearance also served to accentuate the majesty and dignity of their benefactors. Mostly, fools and dwarves were perfectly integrated into court life and cultivated very close relationships with their lords. Even more than other contemporary rulers of his time, Philip II filled his court with *hombres de placer* of all kinds. Indeed, he did this against the express wish of his father and predecessor, Charles V, who, in his *Instrucciones de Palamós* of 1543, had vehemently objected to the prince's too intimate contact with 'locos'.[21] Many of the jesters and dwarves who lived at Philip II's court are named in documentary evidence from this period, and some of them are captured in group or individual portraits, including Magdalena Ruiz together with the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia in the well-known painting attributed to Sánchez Coello.[22] Unfortunately, it has not been possible so far to identify the protagonist of this essay, Gonzalo de Liaño, in any surviving portrait. Two images of dwarves dating from Gonzalillo's lifetime are Anthonis Mor's *Dwarf of Cardinal Granvelle* (Fig. 15), which is held at the Louvre, and Alonso Sánchez Coello's, *Juana Mendoza, Duchess of Béjar with a dwarf* at a private collection in Spain. While these portraits document the quite respectable appearance of dwarves living at court during this period, there are others that present them in their private environment, as for example the *Portrait of a Dwarf and a Jester* at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The left figure, who is staring circumspectly towards the spectator, can easily be identified as the dwarf portrayed in the Louvre painting mentioned above (Fig. 16).

Although several researchers have devoted extensive study to jesters and dwarves at the Spanish court, especially José Luis Moreno Villa and Fernando Bouza, the figure of Gonzalo de Liaño has previously remained largely overlooked.[23] This may be due to the fact that

[21] Bouza/Betrán 2005, p. 81.

[22] Including Pero Hernández de la Cruz (Perejón), Perico de Santervás, Alonso Enríquez de Guzmán, Miguel de Antona, Sancho Morata, Martín de Aguas, Agustín Profit (el Calabrés), Francisca de la Cruz, Luis Tristán and Magdalena Ruiz: see Bouza/Betrán 2005, p. 81.

[23] The most important publications on Spanish court jesters do not mention Gonzalillo, see Bouza 1996; Bouza/Betrán 2005; Moreno Villa 1939. In his edition of Philip II's letters to his daughters, Bouza correctly assumes that Gonzalillo was a

most of the sources relating to him are conserved in Italian archives, while Spanish documentation offers more information on other court dwarves and jesters. Only a few details are known of Gonzalo's family background. He himself claims in one of his letters to be of aristocratic descent, but there is no documentary evidence to support this assertion.[24] Although his activity is only documented from 1579, Gonzalillo must have already been part of court circles in the 1550s, as one of his granddaughters wrote after his death that her grandfather had served the Spanish crown for over thirty years.[25] A letter of recommendation from the Imperial Ambassador at the Spanish court, Hans Khevenhüller, to the Empress Maria of Spain suggests that Gonzalillo not only worked for Philip II, but had previously also been in the service of Rudolf II during the young prince's stay in Spain.[26] From 1563 to 1571, the adolescent sons of Maximilian II, Ernest and Rudolf, were sent to the Spanish court for the purpose of their education. We can assume that Gonzalo de Liaño was also still very young at that time. From 1579 onwards, he is mentioned many times in the diplomatic correspondence between the Florentine and the Spanish court, initially as a court jester ('bufón') to the Spanish king and ultimately as his Gentleman of the Bedchamber ('portero de cámara'). Philip II appointed him to this office in 1583, the year of his marriage to Isabel de Contreras.[27] According to Luigi Dovara, agent

'hombre de placer' and possibly a dwarf of the Spanish king, cf. Bouza 2005, p. 125, n. 297. Rosemarie Mulcahy mentions Gonzalo's activity as a middleman between the Florentine and the Spanish court, yet not his role as a court jester: Mulcahy 1998.

[24] ASF, MDP 5943, f. 4, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Bianca Cappello, 19 August 1586.

[25] 'Doña Mariana de Liaño nieta de Don Gonçalo de Liaño portero de camara que fue del Rey Nuestro Señor Felipe segundo que este en gloria a quien sirbio mas de treinta años en diferentes jornadas (…)', Archivo General de Palacio (AGP), Exp. personales 549, ins. 16, Mariana de Liaño (Madrid) to the Duke of Nájera, Jaime Manuel Manrique de Lara y Cárdenas, 26 November 1647.

[26] 'El personage que la presente dará a V. Magd. es don Gonçalico, gran criado de su Magd. Cathólica [Philip II] y que lo fue tanbién de su Magd. Cesárea [Rudolf II] al tiempo que estuvo en estos regnos. Suplico a Vuestra Magestad lo conozca por tal y para mandarle tratar por esto y las otras buenas partes que le sopbran y faltan como él merece (…)', Universitätsbibliothek Wien, Ms./II 409, Correspondence Hans Khevenhüller, Hans Khevenhüller to Maria of Spain, f. 102r., published in Bouza 2005, p. 125, n. 297.

[27] 'Il buon Gonzaniglio prese moglie, come l'Altezza Vostra facilmente haverà inteso da lui. Et Sua Maestà [Philip II] gli ha fatto mercede d'uno officio di portiere di camera, che ne caverà da' sessanta scudi (…)', ASF, MDP 4914, f. 717r., Luigi Dovara (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici, 18 July 1583.

to the Medici, the dwarf was recompensed with an annual salary of sixty *scudi* for this position. Indeed, in the accounts of the Spanish court from 1583 onwards, regular payments of 20,000 *maravedis* per year are documented to Gonzalo de Liaño as 'quitación' and 'ayuda de costa'—this sum corresponds to approximately 60 *scudi*.[28] In the 1580s, Gonzalillo spent a lot of time in Italy where he cultivated intimate and friendly relations, especially with Grand Duke of Tuscany Francesco I de' Medici and his wife Bianca Cappello. In addition to numerous gifts, including a gold chain valued at 50 *scudi*,[29] in the final years of his life the court jester also received a considerable financial remuneration ('provisione') from the Medici worth about 100 *scudi* per annum.[30] During Gonzalillo's last Italian journey from 1587 to 1588, Bianca Cappello also arranged for his wife, who remained in Spain, to be paid a daily sum of four *reali* in order to support his family during his absence.[31] The Spanish king was also concerned for the well-being of Gonzalillo's wife and children. After Gonzalillo's death in the year 1588, he issued instructions to pay his widow a full salary for a further ten years.[32] An additional factor supports the high esteem that the court jester enjoyed at the Spanish court, namely, King Philip II, Empress Maria of Spain, Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici as well as Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga each accepted roles as godparents to his children who were born between 1584 and 1586.[33] Gonzalo de

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[28] The payment was 6666.5 maravedis for each trimester. One *scudo* was worth 350 *maravedis*. Cf. Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Exp. Personales, 549, ins. 16; AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales 89, ins. 35; AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales 90, ins. 29; AGS, Casa y Sitios Reales 110, ins. 24.

[29] ASF, MDP 5042, without no., Bianca Cappello (Florence) to Bongianni di Piero Gianfigliazzi, 30 October 1586.

[30] 'Pagherete a Gonzalo de Liano spagnuolo, et per lui al s.r Baldassar' Suares, scudi cento di moneta l'anno, li quali paghiamo al detto Gonzalo per una provisione assegnatali da noi a beneplacito nostro', ASF, Depositeria Generale 1000, without no., Bianca Cappello instruction for payment to Napoleone Cambi, 30 November 1586.

[31] ASF, MDP 5945, f. 566r., Vincenzo Alamanni (Madrid) to Bianca Cappello, 19 September 1587; ASF, MDP 5042, without no., Bianca Cappello (Florence) to Vincenzo Alamanni (Madrid), 7 October 1587.

[32] AGP, Exp. Personales 549, ins. 16, without no., instruction for payment of Philip II, Escorial, 3 September 1588.

[33] Philip II and Empress Maria of Spain accept the role of godparent for Gonzalillo's first son, Felipe, born on 3 May 1584, cf. ASF, MDP 5943, f. 4, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Bianca Cappello, 19 August 1586. The second child was born on 15 August 1586, godparents Francesco I. de' Medici and Vincenzo Gonzaga, cf. ASF, MDP 5046, f. 509, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to Bongianni di Piero Gianfigliazzi, 17 July 1586; Archivio di Stato di Mantova (ASMn), Gonzaga 600a, without no., Priore Cavriano (Madrid) to Vincenzo Gonzaga, 22 August 1587.

Liaño died on 23 June 1588 in Scarperia, near Florence. His death was probably due to illness, as in his last letters he repeatedly complained of ill health. At the time of his death, he was accompanying the Duke and Duchess of Mantua on the journey from Mantua to Florence.[34]

As did other *hombres de placer*, Gonzalo de Liaño enjoyed unique proximity to the King. While people of high social rank often had to wait months for a brief audience with Philip II, Gonzalillo had frequent access to the members of the royal family, seeing to their entertainment with stories, games and jokes. Gonzalillo's accounts of his conversations with the monarch offer an unusual and most precious private image of the Prudent King and contribute to our understanding of the human aspects and personal life of Europe's most powerful ruler in the late sixteenth century. As Gonzalillo points out, Philip II took special delight in the jester's accurate reports about his journeys to Italy. The king wanted to learn not only details about the Medici family, but also about Italian art and architecture, the flora and fauna, daily life and the Grand Duke's pastimes. By means of a large plan of the city, Gonzalo illustrated his stories about the palaces and all the interesting features of the city of the Medici.

> Every day I tell the King about nothing but the Grand Duke [*i.e.* Francesco I] and the Grand Duchess [*i.e.* Bianca Cappello], and I report in detail about the time I spent there [in Florence]. In the evenings we amuse ourselves with the painted map of Florence you gave me. With a stick I point out the houses and streets of the city, and the King and the Infanta enjoy that so much that they would even prefer to live there'.[35] 'The King asked me very precisely how your Highness amuses yourself and passes the time. I told him everything, and reported the diversions Your Highness engages in with me (…).[36]

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[34] Gonzalo's death certificate cf. AGP, Exp. Personales 549, ins. 16. For his illness cf. e.g. ASF, MDP 796, f. 248, Gonzalo de Liaño (Florence) to Ferdinando I de' Medici, 14 March 1588. Cf. also ASF, MDP 5042, no fol., Ferdinando de' Medici (Florence) to Vincenzo Alamanni, 28 June 1588.

[35] 'Cada dia no trato antél otra cosa sino del granduque y la granduquesa. (…) Florençia que medistes pintada a las tardes nos entretenemos yo con un palo señalo las casas y calles della que rrecibe tanto contento el Rey y la Ynfanta [Isabel] que les toma gana de bibir en ella'. ASF, MDP 775, f. 504, Gonzalo de Liaño (Monzón) to Francesco I de' Medici, 20 July 1585.

[36] 'Y su Magestad me dizo que bien tenia entendida la voluntad de V. A. preguntome muy particularmiente en que se entretenia V. A. y en que pasaba el tiempo. Yo se lo conte todo y las burlas que V. A. me hazia (…)', ASF, MDP 760, f. 584, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici, 25 April 1583.

As Philip II's court jester, Gonzalillo had many freedoms and could ignore most of the strict rules of court protocol. This clearly emerges from the personal tone in his dealings with the rulers as well as from the jovial and uninhibited style of his writings. In numerous letters, he complained about his high gaming debts: 'Accursed be your servant Luis Dovara, who brought along a devilish game called 'Gioco dell'Oca', played with two dice. (…) It is a game played in Tuscany, and God grant that he who made it may burn [at the stake], for to the Prince and the Infanta and Luis Tristan I have lost 40 Scudi'.[37]

By mimicking the plaintive character of the eternal loser, Gonzalillo reverts to a common topos of the court jester's profession: every jester was also seen as a tragi-comical counterpart to his lord and master and maintained a kind of typological relationship with him. By emphasizing his misfortune, his ugliness or stupidity, the magnificence and dignity of the prince could be especially highlighted.[38] Indeed, a theatrically emphasized misfortune contributed to the entertainment of Philip II: 'It pleases the King to see me enraged'.[39] To Grand Duchess Bianca Cappello, Gonzalillo even wrote secretive love letters: 'The present letter is from Gonzalico, your lover, who ever praises your worth and your dignity, for I am enamoured of you, and let this remain between us, the Grand Duke must know nothing of it, for a love that is not secret is not to be valued'.[40] Any other person would have risked life and limb for such a flirtatious remark, but a court jester could easily get away with this kind of contravention of etiquette. Gonzalillo frequently tended to push his jokes to the limits of what could be reasonably tolerated, yet nobody seriously begrudged him this liberty. He was on friendly terms with numerous highly regarded figures and in

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[37] 'Yo he hechado maldiçiones a un criado de Luys Dobada [Luigi Dovara] que ha traydo un juedo [juego] endimoniado que se llama el juego de la occa que se juega con dos dados y es todo por q.ta si se comiença y se hechan seis con los dados dan en una puente y meten un real el que esta en la hostedia juega dos vezes ay dos pozos, y muerte que se vuelve a jugar de nuevo. Es juego que se juega en la Toscana que plegue a Dios que quien le hizo yo le vea que mado porque me anganado el Principe y la infanta y Luis Tristan quarenta escudos', ASF, MDP 781, f. 126, Gonzalo de Liaño (Monzón) to Francesco I de' Medici, 24 August 1585.

[38] For the typological confrontation of king and jester: Mezger 1981, p. 15.

[39] '(…) y gusta el Rey de verme picado', ASF, MDP 781, f. 126, Gonzalo de Liaño (Monzón) to Francesco I de' Medici, 24 August 1585.

[40] 'Este presente es de Gonzalico vuestro amado que syempre va publicando vuestro valor y barriento questoy enamorado de vos y esto lo digo entre mi y vos y no lo sepa el Granduque porque los amores sy no son secretos, no son estimados', ASF, MDP 5933, f. 171, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Bianca Cappello, 24 April 1583.

their letters of recommendation they repeatedly praised his pleasant, cheerful personality.[41]

During the course of his many journeys, Italy became a second home for Gonzalillo. Whenever he returned to Spain, he immediately wished he were back in Italy again, and he wrote Francesco I de' Medici letters full of rapturous recollections about Italian food, the good wine, the pretty women and his many friends. 'And if you tempt me with your delicacies, I shall fly to you like a falcon; for I yearn for that red wine and the tidbits you set before me, since here the people know not how to live. And I remember the mushroom salad, and the hospitality and the wit you have in your country, and my old amours'.[42] Gonzalillo's enthusiasm for Italy was so great that after his marriage he even wondered if he might not do better to put his wife in a nunnery and himself repair to Italy.[43]

It was not out of the ordinary for dwarves and court jesters to embark upon journeys. Many of them arrived at the court of their prince as foreign 'curiosities' and they sometimes received sobriquets that alluded to their country of origin. A dwarf who was evidently from Germany, Catalina la Alemana,[44] lived among Philip II's entourage as well as a Portuguese court jester, Catalina la Portuguesa.[45] The famous dwarf Estanislao was of Polish origin.[46] In addition, the records also show that dwarves from France, England and Italy lived at the Spanish court.[47] After their acceptance into the royal entourage, some of the court entertainers cultivated such intimate relations with their princes that they had to accompany them wherever they went. Magdalena

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[41] Cf. for example ASF, MDP 5930, f. 261, Giovanni Giorgio Cesarini (Rome) to Bianca Cappello, 4 May 1582.

[42] 'Y si me llamays con algun bocado de alla bolaré come açor que yo os prometo que suspiro por aquellos vinos rojos y bocadicos que me davades porque aca no savemos bivir y acordandome de la ensalade de los hongos y de la llaneza que ay por alla y la mucha fantasia que ay en esta tierra y unos amores viejos que yo tengo', ASF, MDP 759, f. 277, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici, 15 February 1583.

[43] 'Et Sua Maestà gli ha fatto mercede d'uno officio di portiere di camera, che ne caverà da' sessanta scudi, dove Gonzaniglio, che si vede una spesa continua alle spalle, è già pentio del casamento et tratta di mettere sua moglie in un monistero et venirsene a Italia', ASF, MDP 4914, f. 712, Luigi Dovara (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici, 18 July 1583.

[44] Evidence from 1577 to 1603: Moreno Villa 1939, p. 45.

[45] Evidence from 1593 to 1603: Moreno Villa 1939, p. 46.

[46] Died around 1580: Bouza 1996, p. 55.

[47] Bouza 1996, p. 57.

Ruiz, for instance, followed the Spanish king on his stay in Portugal between 1581 and 1583,[48] and several of his dwarves accompanied him to England on the occasion of his marriage to Mary Tudor.[49] Among the princes it was also common practice to offer court jesters, dwarves and deformed individuals as gifts to other rulers or to send them for a limited period of time to other courts. They were regarded as objects from the same realm of curiosities and natural wonders as rare animals and exotic plants.

With his coarse sense of humor and his fondness for games and stories, Gonzalillo was a welcome distraction to everyone and was only reluctantly dismissed from their presence. Numerous letters demonstrate the court jester's great popularity in Italian high society. For instance, Fulvia Sforza, the wife of Mario Sforza, Count of Santa Fiora, writes that the 'highly amicable Gonzalillo' regrettably had not stayed longer than a single day in their Villa della Sforzesca.[50] In a letter from Bologna, Bianca Cappello's daughter Pellegrina reports that the court jester keeps the entire household in high spirits and preferably arranges balls every evening.[51] Bianca Cappello herself felt such an intimate connection to her friend Gonzalo that she anticipated his visit each time with the greatest expectations and reacted in a very irritated manner if he stayed too long elsewhere. Through a letter to Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, she seriously rebukes the jester and invites him to leave Rome and return to Florence immediately, as promised, in order to be of service once again to the Grand Duchess.[52] Her husband, Francesco I,

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[48] Bouza/Betrán 2005, p. 83.

[49] Bouza 1996, p. 57.

[50] 'Con l'occassione del presente Gonzaniglio gentilissimo, che n'ha favorito in questa nostra Villa della Sforzesca, mi è parso debito mio far riverenza a Vostra Altezza Serenissima per ricordarle la molta divotione et osservanza ch'io le porto, acciò si degni favorirmi de' suoi commandamenti. (…) Il detto Gonzaniglio non ha voluto star da noi se non un giorno et questo con gran prieghi, et questo per grande ansietà c'haveva di venire da loro Altezze perché altrimente vi sarebbe stato un mese, con gran piacere di tutti. (…)', ASF, MDP 5930, f. 263, Fulvia Sforza (Villa Sforzesca, Provincia di Grosseto) to Bianca Cappello, 7 May 1582.

[51] 'Se ne sta qui Gonzalo chon desiderio di vedere Vostra Altezza (…) et oggi a visto giostrare al saracino et l'altra sera si fecie un pocho di festino chon questi di chasa dove Gonzaliglio vorrebbe che ogni sera si ballassi. (…)', ASF, MDP 5932, f. 305, Pellegrina Cappello Bentivoglio (Bologna) to Bianca Cappello, 7 January 1584.

[52] 'La stanza costà di Gonzaliglio hormai è troppa, perché purgandosi hora la Granduchessa mia Signora [Bianca Cappello] conviene, che lui sene ritorni subito, conforme alla promessa che fece al Gran Duca [Francesco I]. (…)', ASF, MDP 5109, vol. 1, f. 23 r., Antonio Serguidi (Florence) to Ferdinando I de' Medici (Rome), 20 April 1582.

cultivated a close friendship with the Spanish jester, as many personal letters to him show. Furthermore, Gonzalillo's correspondence attests to his entertaining relations with many other princes and cardinals. In Rome he played *Piquette* with Cardinal Ascanio Colonna and Clelia Farnese, the pretty wife of Giovanni Giorgio Cesarini and mistress of Ferdinando de' Medici.[53] In Turin, he helped Carlo Emanuele II, Duke of Savoy and his wife to pass the time with games. The duke was married to Philip II's daughter Catalina Micaela who had known Gonzalillo since the days of her childhood.[54]

In his *oficio de burlas*, Gonzalillo's behavior and character was not essentially different from other court jesters. However, what did distinguish him were his independent travels to Italy at the 'service' of the king and the unofficial trust that Philip II laid on him. The failure and success of Gonzalo's missions in Italy were regarded by the Italian and Spanish courts as some sort of *divertimento*. It seems nevertheless clear that the Medici and the Florentine aristocracy in general were keen on satisfying Gonzalo's requests because he certainly was one of Philip II's protégées and his off-the-record art agent. By contrast with other agents at European courts, for example Jacopo Strada, Gonzalillo was not a particularly educated man. His strength was not so much in antiquarian or artistic expertise as in his knowledge of men, his friendly interaction with numerous influential personalities and artists and his negotiating skills. His position as court jester afforded Gonzalillo special confidential relationships with Philip II and his family, but also with courtiers, ministers, ambassadors and servants of all ranks. He knew the tastes and artistic preferences of the monarch and his retinue and could assess confidently which art objects or luxury goods would

[53] 'Yo y el Cardenal Colona [Ascanio Colonna] jugamos al piquete, y ganamos a Zangaleto [Guglielmo Sangalletti] ocho escudos y tan bien jugue con la señora Cleria [Clelia Farnese] aquel mismo dia, y le gane siete escudos que los estime mas que favores de damas', ASF, MDP 5936, f. 948, Gonzalo de Liaño (Rome) to Bianca Cappello, 15 June 1584.

[54] 'Entretengo a Sus Altezas (Carlo Emanuele II & Catherine of Austria) con jugar a los çientos y como marido y muger se aconsejan y haçen los trampas que pueden me gana mi dinero haçen me mucha md. y regalos', ASF, MDP 797, f. 104 r., Gonzalo de Liaño (Turin) to Ferdinando I de' Medici (Florence), 6 April 1588; 'Y veo que cada dia a la comida y çena del Granduque gustan de jugar conmigo a los dados y haçenme munchas tranpas y haçen me rapiar y diçen me palabras descomedidas. (…)', ASF, MDP 756, f. 63v., Gonzalo de Liaño (Florence) to Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, 7 July 1582.

meet with favor. For years, he acted as adviser to the Medici family about the choice of suitable presents for the Spanish court. Thus, in January 1583 he wrote to Cardinal Ferdinando in Rome: 'I believe (…), my friend Cardinal, that you should speak with me about the things Signor Giulio [Battaglini] is to bring as presents, since I know the affairs of court thoroughly'.[55]

Over a period of ten years, Gonzalillo traveled to Italy a total of five times and usually stayed there for several months. On his way back to the Spanish court, he always imported a large number of objects. In part these were diplomatic gifts and in part they were goods especially purchased for the Spanish king and his family, or other important figures in court circles. The range of objects that Gonzalo de Liaño procured for the Spanish court included works of art as well as relics and other *devotionalia*, plants, animals, astronomical instruments, medicines and the most diverse luxury items and curiosities. From an art historical perspective, the court jester's correspondence is primarily of interest for three reasons. First, some of the documented objects can be identified as artworks that still exist today. Second, the sources shed light on art production and the history of collections in Florence and Madrid. Third, they lead to new information about the relations of diplomacy and cultural exchange among European courts.

In the 1580s, Grand Duke Francesco de' Medici's *studiolo* was one of Europe's most famous art cabinets, alongside the *Kunst- & Wunderkammern* of Ambras and Prague. The *Tribuna* in the Uffizi, which at the time was still under construction, was already the focus of attention from beyond state boundaries. The Grand Duke, known for his introverted character, dedicated himself to scientific and alchemist experiments in the *Casino di San Marco*. Moreover, the Medici villas and gardens were famous far beyond state boundaries. The numerous objects, which Gonzalillo exported from Florence to Spain, made up a representative cross-section of all the novelties and peculiarities that the Tuscan court had to offer in the 1580s and presented a faithful record of Francesco I's collectors' interests which was intended to

[55] Giulio Battaglini was Ferdinando's agent in Madrid. Cf. ASF, MDP 5107, Gonzalo de Liaño (Toledo?) to Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, 14 January 1583.

compile *naturalia, artificialia* and *scientifica* in a universal system of knowledge.[56]

Some of the items that arrived at the Spanish court through Gonzalillo's mediation can be connected to pieces that still exist today. Several paintings by the court painter Alessandro Allori are worthy of mention, including the *Holy Family with Saints Anne and Francis of Paola* now in the Prado and the famous copy of the Florentine miraculous image of the *Annunziata* in the Escorial (Fig. 17).[57] A letter dated 1582 mentions a porphyry relief and an alabaster ciborium which can both be identified with items still kept today in the Escorial.[58] The relief can be attributed to Francesco Ferrucci, called 'Il Tadda'. The alabaster ciborium with its *Evangelists* painted on glass comes from a Volterranean sculptor's workshop, possibly Bartolommeo Rossetti's (Fig. 18). Even Antonio Santucci's great armillary sphere in the library of the Escorial was sent to Spain by means of Gonzalo de Liaño.[59] Botany was a common interest for the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Spanish King and in 1582 Gonzalillo brought a series of botanical drawings to Spain. Even though the author of the drawings is not mentioned in the documents, we can be certain that they were produced by Jacopo Ligozzi who in that period worked as a court painter in Florence. The drawings sent to Madrid no longer seem to exist, but in formal terms they certainly resembled Ligozzi's other nature drawings that are nowadays held at the Gabinetto dei Disegni in Florence.[60] The above-mentioned map of Florence, which Gonzalillo used in 1585 to illustrate his travel report to Philip II, was almost certainly a copy of the famous Buonsignori map that had first been printed in Florence only a few months before (Fig. 19).[61] Philip II was known for his devoutness and the objects sent from Florence to Spain also included many relics and reliquaries. One of the most significant pieces was a precious reliquary of lapis lazuli and gold that contained about twenty relics.[62]

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[56] Berti 1967.

[57] Salort/Kubersky 2006.

[58] Salort/Kubersky 2007; Kubersky/Salort 2007.

[59] Salort/Kubersky 2007.

[60] ASF, MDP 259, ff. 32v.–33r., 24 October 1582, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to Luigi Dovara: 'alcune piante ritratte al naturale fatte per mano d'un nostro dipintore, che è tenuto eccellente'; ASF, MDP 760, f. 584, 25 April 1583, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Francesco de' Medici.

[61] See Salort/Kubersky 2007.

[62] 'Sac. Catt.ca R. M.tà. Si come non ho altro oggetto, che di tener viva continuamente la memoria della mia servitù con V. M.tà, così piglio volentieri ogni occasione

The piece is now lost, yet, judging from the detailed description which is conserved, it must have been a very elaborate piece.[63] The list of Gonzalillo's goods might be further continued. It even included curious items such as herbal mouthwash ('acqua da denti'), live shrimps and a leopard for hunting.[64] Even the *Gioco dell'Oca* (game of goose), now known all over Europe, was first introduced to the Spanish court by Gonzalillo.[65]

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che mi si presenti per minima che sia, come questa del reliquario, che le mando per il Barbiero di Don Pietro mio fratello [Felice Gattai], non perché io lo stimi degno di V. M.tà, ma perché ella lo tenga come opera fabricata in questa sua casa. Io ci ho accomodato molte reliquie conforme alla nota qui inclusa, et V. M.tà può credere che l'ho cavate di luogo, che son tutte sicure et approvate, et meritano d'essere conservate fra l'altre sue di San Lorenzo. Se il dono le sarà grato, io harò satisfatto a me medesimo che non desidero altro che servirla, et se altrimenti riceva la sincerità dell'animo mio, che sarà sempre pronto a spender la vita, et quanto tengo in suo servitio et con inchinarmele humilmente, Le bacio le mani, et prego Dio che le doni somma felicità et contentezza. Dal Poggio a Caiano li 30 di settembre 1581. Di V. Mtà Catt.ca humile et oss.mo se[rvitore]. El Gran Duca di Toscana', AGS, Estado, Leg. 1451, f. 131r., Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to Philip II, 30 September 1581. Cf. also ASF, MDP 321, f. 121, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to Luigi Dovara, 2 March 1580 (1581); ASF, MDP 257, f. 68r., passport for Felice Gattai signed by Francesco I de' Medici (Florence), 1 October 1581; ASF, MDP 4914, f. 26v., Luigi Dovara (Lisbon) to Francesco I de' Medici, 29 January 1582; ASF, MDP 754, f. 291v., Felice Gattai (Lisbon) to Francesco I de' Medici, 14 February 1582; AGS, Estado 1451, f. 154, Francesco I (Florence) to Philip II, 8 settembre 1583. Some of these documents have also been quoted in Mulcahy 1998, p. 177 and notes.

[63] 'Un relicario hecho a manera de humilladero seysabado, con su peana que asienta sobre seys tortugas, y sobre ella otra peana, que assienta sobre seys harpías, y en cada seysabo una piedra lapisláçuli, de dos dedos y medio de largo y medio de ancho (…), y sobre esta peana asientan seys columnas de dicho lapis lázuli, con vasas y capiteles de plata dorada, con arcos del mesmo lapislázuli, con frisso y cornixa, y un zimborio seysabado de plata dorada, y en cada seysabo del zimborrio un óbalo, y en cada óbalo una piedra lapizlázuli (…), y en lo alto del cimborrio por remate la figura de Sanct Lorenço con las parrillas en la mano hizquierda y una palma en la derecha, y en medio de la peana, debaxo del çimborrio, una peana de seys gradas seysabada de plata dorada, y ençima della una buxeta de lapislázuli con peana y tapador de oro esmaltado de diversas colores, y por remate del tapador una cruçetica de christal (…) Tiene de alto hasta la figura media vara (…) El qual dicho relicario envió a su Magestad el Duque de Florencia,' Zarco Cuevas 1930, p. 84, no. 476, dalla Entrega 4.a, 54–56, I. y M. L. I v.

[64] For the mouthwash cf. for example ASF, MDP 4913, f. 39, Luigi Dovara (Jelves [Gelves]) to Francesco I de' Medici, 20 January 1580, and MDP 259, f. 32, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to Luigi Dovara, 24 October 1582. For the shrimps cf. for example ASF, MDP 5022, f. 328, Luigi Dovara (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici, 1 October 1583. For the leopard cf. for example ASF, MDP 265, f. 29, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence) to Diego de Cordova, 22 January 1584 (1585).

[65] ASF, MDP 781, f. 126, Gonzalo de Liaño (Monzón) to Francesco I de' Medici, 24 August 1585.

The most valuable object which the Medici sent to Philip II through the court jester was an art cabinet made from ebony and semi-precious stones. A fragment of a similar *studiolo* that Francesco I previously had made for his own *Tribuna* may give a vague impression of the splendor of this piece of furniture, which unfortunately has not been preserved.[66] Surprisingly, Francesco I did not offer the cabinet to Philip II as a gift, but proposed a barter deal. In exchange for the precious artifact he hoped to obtain a considerable quantity of uncut precious stones as they were frequently imported on the Spanish galleys from the New World. Gonzalillo had the unhappy task of acquainting the monarch with the Grand Duke's pretentious claim. Negotiations dragged on for several years and finally failed because the powerful Spanish monarch obviously had no intention at all of accommodating Francesco I with his inappropriate demand, explaining that between kings and princes it was not common to conclude barter transactions.[67] The episode proves how closely the giving of diplomatic gifts was also connected to the strict rules of court protocol and the high expectations that were often connected with them.

While Gonzalo imported objects of Italian material culture to Spain, he was somewhat of a source of information for the king as well. As an *hombre de placer* with access to the private circles of the Italian noble families, he was smart enough to witness and later report to the king and his ministers what he saw and heard during his trips, including not only artistic issues but also military information as well as the intrigues and gossip at Medici court. In a letter of 1587, the ambassador of Mantua in Spain warns Vincenzo Gonzaga that Gonzalillo is a spy: '(…) it would be advisable to give him a gift, because to tell Your Highness the truth, I believe that he is coming more in order to spy than for the other things that he says'.[68] Antonio Serguidi, secretary to the Medici, also paints a negative image of the jester, describing him in a letter to Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici as an unpleasant

[66] Heikamp 1964, pp. 11–30; Heikamp 1997, p. 80.

[67] ASF, MDP 5944, f. 411, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Bianca Cappello, 2 May 1587. Cf. also ASF, MDP 265, f. 28, Francesco I de' Medici (Florence?) to Sebastián de Santoyo, 22 January 1585.

[68] '(…) sarà bene regalarlo, perché a dirlo a Vostra Altezza liberamente, io credo ch'egli venga piutosto per spiare che per altre cose come egli dice. Questo solo dirò a Vostra Altezza che Sua Maestà [Philip II] gli crede assai, e ragiona con esso longamente e d'ogni sorta di cose', ASMn, Gonzaga 600a, without no., Priore Cavriano (Madrid) to Vincenzo Gonzaga, 22 August 1587.

manipulator and plotter of intrigues.[69] It is difficult to gauge to what extent Gonzalillo was actually an active informant or was used as a sort of spy. His reports to Philip II do include news about military accomplishments of the Medici such as the construction of new fortresses and harbors and the composition of the Grand Ducal fleet. This is documented, for instance, in a letter dated 1583:

> I have given the King such a good account that he was impressed. I told him about the city of Livorno and how Your Highness [*i.e.* Francesco I] has fortified it and how Your Highness has twelve-thousand turks in order to arm twelve galleys, and the King turned to me in order to ratify that it was twelve-thousand turks, and I answered him that it was as I had said. And I also told him about Your Highness's galleys (…). And I also told him about Elba and about the castles you have and about their importance for the entire Christianity'.[70]

Thanks to his diverse official and unofficial roles as court jester, dwarf, entertainer, *portero de cámara*, agent and possibly even spy, Gonzalo de Liaño can be identified as one of those 'double-agents' who carried out diplomatic or administrative tasks, but also acted as cultural brokers. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to perceive Gonzalo as a peripatetic *hombre de placer* running multiple errands which certainly embodied the amusement and pastime of the courts he visited as a rather peculiar 'courtier' and 'agent' of the King of Spain. Some of his characteristics correspond to what Marika Keblusek has described as a profile of the early modern agent, especially his 'stamina' and 'social skills', his 'ability to switch between quite different tasks' and his 'mobility'.[71] His qualities as a court jester, particularly his wit and his knowledge of human nature, were the basis of his success as an

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[69] ASF, MDP 5109, vol. 1, f. 45, Antonio Serguidi (Livorno) to Ferdinando de' Medici, 9 May 1582: 'Gonzadillo non è ancora comparso, se bene è stato desiderato, più di quello che mi paia revochi la qualità sua, elle lo haranno conosciuto per un sudicio fante, avaro, et che col parlar' in secreto sa vendere la sua mercantia, la quale si spacua qua troppo'.

[70] '[H]e dado tan buena relaçion al rey [Philip II] que esta espantado, dijele della ciudad de Liorne [Livorno] y como Vuestra Alteza [Francesco I de' Medici] la fortaleçe y como tiene Vuetra Alteza docemille turcos para armar doce galeras y bolviome el rey a rretificar si eran docemill turcos y yo le respondi que era como le abia dicho. Y tanbien le conte de las galeras de Vuestra Alteza (…). Y tanbien le conte de la Helba [Elba] y de los castillos que tiene y de la ynportancia que son para toda la xpianidad [cristiandad]', ASF, MDP 760, f. 423, Gonzalo de Liaño (Madrid) to Francesco I de' Medici (Florence), 4 April 1583.

[71] Keblusek 2006, p. 11.

agent. His position as a jester and his great popularity among court circles allowed him to keep Europe's most powerful ruler continuously updated on what was going on behind the scenes in Italy, *i.e.* outside the official diplomatic exchange routes. The Grand Duke of Tuscany, on the other hand, used Gonzalillo to demonstrate his loyalty towards the Spanish crown by means of his diplomatic gifts, but also to display the political and military force of his state and to emphasize his avant-garde position regarding the arts and sciences.[72]

[72] A more extensive publication about Gonzalo de Liaño and his role in the cultural exchange between Italy and Spain is in preparation for print. For more details about the artistic exchange between Florence and Spain, see Salort/Kubersky 2006 and 2007. The authors wish to thank the Medici Archive Project, especially the former director Edward Goldberg and the current director Ippolita Morgese, as well as the Getty Foundation for the support of their research.

CHAPTER TWELVE

'FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE': AGENTS AND THEIR VICTIMS[1]

Martin Dönike

Art lovers who traveled to Rome at the end of the eighteenth century had to endure quite a few strains and threats. Not only did they have to cope with the long journey over the Alps or over the pirate struck ocean, they also had to put up with uncomfortable guesthouses, bad food and quite often fleas.[2] In 1755 the German antiquarian Johann Joachim Winckelmann wrote from the perspective of a (neo)classic Philistine: 'As soon as you come into the region of Trent you already find poverty and dirtiness'.[3] In addition, travelers had to ward off the bad air (*mal-aria*) and marauding bands of thieves, which were haunting their anxiety dreams.[4]

Once in Rome they were not yet out of danger. In his book *Rom und seine Einwohner am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (*Rome and its Residents at the End of the Eighteenth Century*) published in 1794, Giuseppe Gorani portrays the fate of the young Earl Joseph von Fries. This *nouveau riche* Austrian heir to an estate in the millions came to Italy in

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[1] A German version of the essay will be published in the conference proceedings 'Rome and the Constitution of a European Cultural Heritage in the Early Modern Period: The Impact of Agents and Correspondents on Art and Architecture', edited by Christoph Frank.

[2] Regarding the threat by 'Algerian pirates' and 'Christian corsairs' see, for example, Wilhelm Heinse's letter to Friedrich Jacobi from 26 January 1781, in which he tells of his cruise from Marseille to Genoa (Heinse 1902–1925, vol. 10, p. 97).

[3] Winckelmann 1952–1957, vol. 1, nr 121, p. 189: Winckelmann to Francke, 7 December 1755. As for 'hazards' such as crime, accidents and illness: Black 2003, pp. 104–117.

[4] Cf. Winckelmann's already quoted letter to Francke of 7 December 1755: 'So wie wir uns der Campagna di Roma näherten, äußerten sich Zeichen von ungesunder Luft. Zweyen in unserer Gesellschaft war der Mund dermaßen aufgelaufen, mit einer schmerzhaften Empfindung, daß sie den ganzen Vormittag das Gesicht verbunden hatte. Etliche 30 Meilen (nämlich Italiänische, deren 5 oder 6 auf eine deutsche Meile gehen mögen) von Rom, da wo die Via Flaminia angehet, gehet auch die traurige Aussicht an. Es ist eine wahre Einöde, so daß man kaum einen Baum findet: Hier und da ranken Weinreben auf dem Acker von selbst fort; aber man siehet keine Einwohner; dieses währt bis an die Vigne von Rom' (Winckelmann 1952–1957, vol. 1, nr 121, p. 190).

1786 with 'the double intention to not only go and and see the masterpieces adorning the country but also to be seen himself':[5]

> As proud as he was of his half-knowledge, he would have been ashamed to ask for a guide. At his arrival in Rome the first thing he did was to pass himself off as a fundamental connoisseur. He was put to the test at once and after only a few hours it was easy to tell how much he really knew. The trap was set immediately and the arrogant young man walked right into it. Some clever gentlemen, thanks to his letters of recommendation, visited the places he attended, including the houses in which he stayed. They encouraged him to talk and listened to him carefully, pretending to be full of amazement and admiration.[6]

Finally, the alleged 'gentlemen' started to 'talk about magnificent paintings, cameos, busts and coins that were of a rare perfection and value.[7] The inevitable happened: the earl gratefully accepted their offer to get him apparently exclusive contacts and regarded it the greatest favor 'to have the permission to buy a few copies for good money that would only have been rejects for true connoisseurs'.[8]

But that was not all. The young earl was not only betrayed by art dealers but also by artists such as the renowned cameo cutter Giovanni Pichler (1734–1791), who had no scruples in regard to taking advantage of the young man's vanity. According to Gorani, the earl paid Pichler a very high price for an antique cameo showing the image of the alleged 'God Luna'. The certificate of authenticity the artist gave the earl to his request ran as follows: 'I, the undersigned, admit to have sold his lordship *[F]ries* a cameo showing the old Egyptian God *Luna*. This work is *graeco-latine*. Pichler'.[9]

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[5] Gorani 1794b, p. 309 (my translation). The book is an abridged extract of Gorani 1794a; the Fries anecdote: vol. 2, pp. 247–253 ('Le présomptueux dupé'). Joseph Graf von Fries, born in 1765, whose name is only half-heartedly concealed by Gorani as 'Graf Tries' [Earl Tries] had traveled through Italy from autumn 1786 to summer 1787, where he also met Goethe, among others. He died in 1788 in Vöslau/Austria. In 1787 the then 22–year-old Fries let Angelika Kauffmann portray him along with his latest acquisition, Canova's famous group *Theseus and Minotaurus* which today is in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London: Sandner 1988, no. 34, pp. 38f.

[6] Gorani 1794b, pp. 309f.

[7] Gorani 1794b, pp. 311f.

[8] Gorani 1794b, p. 312. In the French original 'véritables connoisseurs'.

[9] Gorani 1794b, p. 314. The deception of Fries by an unnamed cameo cutter is also mentioned by Goethe in a letter to Duke Carl August of Weimar, 28 September 1787 (*Goethes Werke* 1887–1919, Abt. IV, vol. 8, p. 262) as well as in his *Italienische Reise*.

According to Gorani's reports, Fries did not notice 'the irregularity of the certificate', but he rather 'showed it around, read it aloud, repeated the expressions and thought himself the owner of something unique of its kind'[10]—which, indeed, was the case. It might sound macabre, but luckily Fries died shortly after his return from Rome and did not have to live to see Gorani compromise him in public. The cause of his death was a fever—what else would it have been?—he is said to have caught in Italy.

Stories like this are not uncommon at the end of the eighteenth century. They are told over and over again in guide books, letters and memoirs with a mixture of indignation and 'Schadenfreude'.[11] To avoid becoming a victim of such frauds it was advisable to trust the guidance and opinion of respectable experts. Gorani recommended: 'Whoever wants to buy a collection of antiques or paintings has to get acquainted with the best artists and the most learned antique dealers'.[12] This advice was not only addressed to the travelers staying in Rome, it was also valid for art lovers who preferred to stay at home yet nonetheless hoped to complete their collections with works of the Roman art market. Functionally, this is exactly where the art agent is brought into play. As mediator for art deals, it was his task to avoid frauds such as those mentioned. Needless to say, at the same time his clients hoped to make purchases under especially favorable conditions.

In the eighteenth century, the term 'agent' referred to several yet tightly connected functions such as the diplomatic and political commissioner (royal agent or consular agent), the business man (trade agent or insurance agent) as well as the employee of the intelligent service or spy (secret agent).[13] All of these interpretations can be found combined in the 'art agent' who not only fulfilled diplomatic and business tasks on behalf of one or several clients, but occasionally—as the famous example of Baron Philipp von Stosch shows—could even act as a spy.[14]

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[10] Gorani 1794b, p. 314.
[11] Cf. for example the notorious Nicolai 1834.
[12] Gorani 1794b, p. 308.
[13] For its meaning and use in the German language: Grimm 1998, vol. 2, pp. 33–35.
[14] See Lewis 1961.

To be successful, an art agent had to find the difficult balance between a collector's or client's financial expectations on the one hand and the dealers' and artists' expectations on the other. All of them wanted to make an equally good profit. Ideally, all three groups—collector, dealer and artist—gained from 'their' agent's work. The agent's profit, on the other hand, depended on a successful transaction. One could therefore pointedly describe the agent as a kind of James Bond of cultural transfer, representing his clients' interests (and therefore the interests of the free art world itself) and willing to push through these interests if necessary. Connoisseurs of the genre know, however, that reality rarely agrees with such an ideal image. Even agents are not always as unselfish as one might expect, especially when it comes to large amounts of money. They act as double agents, allowing the 'opponent' to bribe them or follow their own intentions. In other words: once you get involved with an agent, you can never be sure whose interest he is truly keeping an eye on.

It is well known that the business practices of art dealer and art agent Thomas Jenkins (who is said to have worked as a spy for the British government)[15] were not always fully legal. While the German poet Goethe, who met him in 1786–1787, merely called him a 'smart and lucky scoundrel', the already mentioned Guiseppe Gorani painted a much more critical picture of him.[16] He describes Jenkins as a man who had deliberately used every trick of dissimulation possible to 'find an audience for the various things he's dealing with':

> If it is a coin you want to buy he explains the historical event to which it relates and makes a magnificent eulogy and fiery lecture extolling the rareness and noteworthiness of the piece for which he's asking a considerable price. He starts to cry once he has to give it to the buyer at the agreed price. A father could not express his pain more vividly at his only daughter's departure into a far-away country. (…) I haven't seen one actor who could portray emotion and distress more expressively and with a better pantomime than Jenkins did at such occasions. He could add material to a splendid comedy.[17]

[15] Cf. Ford 1974.

[16] Goethe 1887–1919, Abt. IV, vol. 8, p. 137 (letter from 13–20 January 1787). In the German original 'kluger und glücklicher Schalck'.

[17] Gorani 1794, pp. 32–34.

This procedure might pass as a special but still legal form of salesmanship, yet other reports on Jenkins' practices suggest criminal intent. Sculptor John Nollekens maintained that Jenkins had heavily restored sculptures treated with tobacco juice to give them an antique patina. Moreover, the agent had his own people produce intaglios and cameos which he sold as antique originals to foreign visitors.[18]

Dragged into one of his frauds was another art agent, Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein (1719–1793), who had bought a series of paintings from Jenkins on behalf of Catherine the Great. It was the famous Baron Grimm who had brought Catherine in touch with Reiffenstein, so it was to him that Catherine wrote:

> It is unbelievable how Reffenstein [*sic*] was duped this time. I am now asking you to strongly recommend him to stop making business with Mr. Jenkins. It's a scandal how such poor paintings are traded in the name of other painters. The dismay at these scribbles was great.[19]

It can hardly be assumed that Reiffenstein had dared to defraud his powerful client he owed his financial livelihood to. So in this case it seems that not only the tsarina but also her art agent had fallen victim to Jenkins.

These incidents surely contributed to the fact that art dealers and agents were brought into disrepute among their contemporaries. It was not without reason that in his *Moderne Kunstchronik* (*Modern Art Chronicle*) the German landscape painter Joseph Anton Koch counted three practices closely related to the art agent's profession among the 'seven deadly sins that expelled art from paradise'. They are the 'Kunstantiquariat' (*i.e.* the study of antique art), the art trade and the 'over-intelligent connoisseurship'.[20] Needless to say, it was mainly the *artists* who regarded themselves as victims: Friedrich Müller, a painter who lived in Rome for almost half a century—from 1779 until his death in 1825—had the malicious opinion that artists 'working

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[18] See Michaelis 1882, pp. 76–78; Pierce 1965; Scott 2004, pp. 97–100.

[19] Quoted from Descargues 1961, p. 43 (my translation). Cf. also Noack 1927, vol. 1, p. 341.

[20] Koch 1984, pp. 41–60. The remaining four 'deadly sins' refer to patronage, art academies, art literature and galleries. The contemporary term 'Antiquar' (antiquary) could also refer to an art agent's activities, see Weidner 1998, vol. 1, p. 45: 'Unter dieser Berufsbezeichnung werden vielseitige Tätigkeiten zusammengefaßt, die je nach persönlicher Gewichtung die kunsthistorische, numismatische, philologische, kulturgeschichtliche und letztlich auch wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Gelehrten ausmachen'.

under hard-hearted *ciceroni* and art antiquarians had more to bear than Abraham's seed in Egyptian slavery'.[21]

The following remarks will only focus on one of these 'hard-hearted *ciceroni*', namely Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein who, besides being a *cicerone*, worked as an art agent for the courts of Gotha and St Petersburg in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The aim is not to personally denunciate him as a swindler, but rather to point out some of the negative aspects of the art agents' profession that seem to be inevitably linked to it.

If one believes in what was said in the obituaries after his death in 1793 the art agent Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein had been a paragon of 'honesty' and 'unselfishness':

> The reflection on the enjoyable, innocently cheerful life of such an aesthete fills us with soft and happy feelings. These sensitive souls live on the everlasting spiritual and sensual joys in their ideal world, just like, according to the poets' legend, the ever happy, ever singing cricket only feeds on the dew of the heavens. The worries of life slip off them as from a polished surface. And amidst the other people's struggle of selfish passions they do not demand any of the world's treasures or advantages—they just want to unselfishly and silently look at the beautiful pieces of fine art. It is with such innocent joys that their souls join every soft emotion and they soothe any grief and they intensify any happiness within their small circle.[22]

Reiffenstein, so the obituary goes on, had constantly tried to give young artists work from foreigners without ever being led by patriotic prejudices. For this reason 'a lot of artists now spread across Europe' would 'often gratefully remember him and praise his fatherly, disinterested

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[21] Müller 1996–1998, vol. 3, p. 1394.

[22] *Nekrolog* 1794, vol. 1, p. 3 (my translation). However, at the end of his obituary Schlichtegroll had to admit: 'Freylich konnte es unter diesen Umständen nicht fehlen, dass nicht hie und da ein Künstler, der nicht mit ihm in Verbindung stand, über eine Art von Abhängigkeit klagte, in der sich die Künstler in Rom von ihm befanden' (Ibid., p. 28). In a supplement to the obituary published in 1798, Schlichtegroll at last felt the need to make the following correction: 'In der Oberdeutschen allgemeinen Literatur-Zeitung 1796, pag. 730 sind bey Gelegenheit einer Recension des Nekrologs einige Unrichtigkeiten in Reifensteins [sic] Biographie angezeigt worden, deren Berichtigung hier aufgenommen werden muss. Es heißt: 'Reifenstein zeigt sich in einem trügenden Lichtglanze; er ist kein Ritter ohne Tadel; er hatte viele Schwächen, war oft ungerecht gegen fremdes Verdienst, das ihm huldigte. Die Klagen vieler gegen ihn sind nicht ohne Grund'.' Schlichtegroll 1798, pp. 162f.

care, often combined with self-sacrifice, that they experienced under a foreign sky from this friend to the people and to art'.[23] Even if one takes into account the topical character of the text, this posthumous image of Reiffenstein still seems too good to be true. Indeed, while he was still alive, Reiffenstein was more than once accused of favoring the interests of some of his artist friends, namely Angelica Kaufmann (1741–1807) and Jakob Philipp Hackert (1737–1807).

In a letter to his father dated June 1787, the young Swiss painter Conrad Geßner (1764–1826) reported that he had been invited to a lavish dinner at Hackert's house which turned out to be some sort of publicity event held by Reiffenstein in honor of their host's works of art. 'At the table', young Geßner wrote, 'a lot was talked about art' and

> many a good artist was criticized—Mr. Reifenstein applauded any opinion and knew how to compare Mr. Hackert's works with others in a way that I, as a young artist, when looking through the portfolio, could do nothing but remain silent or express my amazement. I chose the first so as to have a good relationship with this matador in the future. That's what you have to do, don't you, when you want to make your fortune in art, especially in high society.[24]

Hackert, to be sure, had made his fortune that way: Reiffenstein found his friend numerous orders, perhaps the most important one being the paintings of the naval *Battle of Çesme* (1771, St Petersburg, Hermitage) for Catherine the Great. Their success at the Russian court was the painter's international breakthrough.[25]

Yet this is only one 'positive' side of the complot. There is another negative and more destructive side to it. Both the German poet Johann Gottfried Herder and the Weimar Duchess Anna Amalia, for example, who stayed in Italy from 1788–1789, unanimously reported that

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[23] Nekrolog 1793, pp. 11f.

[24] Geßner 1801, p. 151: letter of 22 June 1787, in the German original 'Bey Tisch wurde viel über Kunst gesprochen und mancher brafe Künstler scharf genug mitgenommen.—Herr Reifenstein gab jedem Urtheile seinen Beyfall, und wußte dann auf eine Art Herrn Hackerts Arbeiten mit andern so zu vergleichen, daß mir, als jungem Künstler, nun beym Durchsehen des Portefeuilles, nichts übrig blieb, als zu schweigen, oder zu bewundern. Ich wählte das erstere, als die beßte Manier, mit diesem Matador mich auch für die Zukunft in ein gefälliges Verhältnis zu setzen. Nicht wahr, so muß man's treiben, wenn man besonders in der vornehmen Welt, mit der Kunst sein Glück machen will?'.

[25] Krönig/Wegner 1994, p. 143; Weidner 1998, pp. 45–51.

Hackert and Reiffenstein plotted against the young German painter Tischbein. To Luise von Diede, Herder wrote:

> Hackert and old Reifenstein, who despite all his alleged honesty only believes in himself and who is the most narrow-minded and trite babbler I have the honor to know oppress [Tischbein] behind his back—and pretending to be friends they do not let him climb the ladder. The man is eaten up with worries and yearns to go back to Germany.[26]

In Goethe's literary bequest there is a list of nicknames of personalities the poet knew during his stay in Italy. Under the title 'Santa Famiglia' the following entries can be found:

R. Dio Padre Onnipotente
P.H. Dio Figlio Redentore a causa di pranzi
G.H. D. Sprito Santo onnisciente
A. Madonna
Z. St. Giuseppe
Rubi Sommaro[27]

The closer circle around Reiffenstein appears here as the 'Santa Famiglia' (the 'Holy Family'). Typically enough, Reiffenstein himself, figuring as 'Dio Padre Onnipotente', is on top of the list. Subordinate to him are Jakob Philipp Hackert (P.H.) as 'God the Son and Saviour because of the meals', as well as his brother Georg (G.H.) as the 'omniscient Holy Ghost'; Angelica Kaufmann (A.) figures as 'Madonna', her husband Antonio Zucchi (Z.) as 'Holy Joseph' and the otherwise marginal English painter Rubby (R.) as 'ass'.

Reiffenstein as 'almighty God the Father'—one feels almost tempted to say the 'Godfather' of the Roman art scene who has the power to build up and destroy, if not lives, then at least careers (Fig. 20). His victims, *i.e.* those artists who did not belong to the 'cartel' of the 'Santa

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[26] Herder 2003, p. 337: Herder to Luise von Diede, 10 February 1789: 'Hackert, der alte Reifenstein selbst, der bei aller seiner anscheinenden u. von ihm selbst geglaubten Ehrlichkeit der bornierteste, platteste Ba-Ba ist, den ich zu kennen die Ehre habe, drücken ihn insgeheim, u. mit dem größesten Schein der Freundschaft lassen sie ihn nicht aufkommen. [Tischbein] frißt sich im Innern ab, u. sehnt sich zurück nach Deutschland'. According to Herder, Tischbein believed that Reiffenstein had impeded the extension of the pension given to him by Ernst II. Cf. Harnack 1890, p. 141: Anna Amalia to Goethe from Rome, 18 March 1789: '*Tischbein* ist zu mir nach Rom gekommen, das ist ein herzlicher guter Mensch, der alte SeeLöwe genand Reifenstein und Mein Freund *Philip Hacker* [sic] suchen ihm auf alle Art zu drükken'. Regarding the tense relationship between Tischbein and Reiffenstein, who had overseen the painter on behalf of Ernst II of Saxe-Gotha in Rome: Beck 1854, pp. 261–310, esp. pp. 274ff.

[27] Goethe 1985–1999, vol. 15/2, p. 786. Cf. Zapperi 1999, pp. 118–122.

Famiglia', did indeed seem to have had that impression: 'As long as he lived, even after his death, many, especially artists, did not have a single good word for him', Goethe's friend Johann Heinrich Meyer wrote in 1805. The reason for this is explained as follows:

> Since he organized quite a few, occasionally important orders of art works from abroad while maybe sometimes favoring his best friends, those who felt left behind complained a lot—some of them even hated him quite bitterly.[28]

It is only against this backdrop that one can understand some verses the already mentioned painter Friedrich Müller wrote on the occasion of Reiffenstein's death. *Der neue Python (The New Python)* is the title of this 'Elegy at Councillor Reiffenstein's grave'. Its perfidiousness lies in the fact that for all his life the deceased had praised the python killing *Apollo of Belvedere* as the best example of fine arts. Yet here Reiffenstein himself appears as a 'maggot' worthy of extermination by the Greek god:

> Curse and devastation of art, old rattling snake
> That befogs and singes everything with a toxic breath
> Art destroyer, not protector, plague of nobles not aid
> You lick marrow and blood of those you beset
> You boastingly call yourself a shield of all those you strangle
> (…)
> Up o Father Apollo! Sublime being, save
> Us from the brazen yoke, throw the evildoer down!
> Ha! I can hear the bowstring rushing, can you hear the nymph's cheering
> Holy! holy Apollo! your bow has done it!
> Squirm, maggot! we cry, cry at your grave

[28] Quoted from: Goethe 1985–1998, vol. 6/2, p. 331. Meyer's essay forms a chapter in *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*, published by Goethe in the same year. A few years later, J.D. Fiorillo (Fiorillo 1818, vol. 3, pp. 322f.) describes the actions of the 'cartel' as follows: 'Einige Zeit vor seinem Aufenthalte in Neapel hatte er [*i.e.* Hackert] sich allen Künstlern in Rom, die deutschen ausgenommen, verhaßt gemacht, indem er, und die Angelika und Reifenstein mit den deutschen Künstlern, und mit Ausschluß aller Mahler in Rom, von welcher Nation sie auch waren, gesellschaftliche Zirkel der Art bildeten, welche die Franzosen *Tripotages* und *Coteries* nennen, in welche sie alle Fremden, von dem Fürsten an bis zu den in ihren Diensten stehenden Edelleuten herab, hineinzuziehen, sich einander in die Hände zu arbeiten, und den Ruf aller Künstler zu verkleinern suchten, die nicht zu ihrem Kreise gehörten. Diese Gesellschaften wurden in Reifensteins Hause gehalten'.

> because you will now decay, ha! no! because you have choked too long.[29]

Müller can indeed be called Reiffenstein's most 'famous' victim, not least because of his letters and writings in which he did not mince matters and repeatedly accused the group around the 'babbler' Reiffenstein to have calumniated him publicly and thereby have led him into financial plight:

> The eagerness of these gentlemen at the fellow men's disposal drives them to teach foreigners coming from Germany and asking for me such positive and loving things about me. Thus, all of them stay away from me within half a mile, probably out of respect. Naturally, this does not increase my reputation as an artist, but that is not intended of course. It only serves to train their knowledge on the Kabala and rabbinical mysteries. So when returning to their home country, many a traveler I did neither see nor talk to here in Rome talked about me with a certain fierceness and rashness (…).[30]

Reiffenstein, as can be seen from this letter, obviously used his machinations not only to try to eliminate an insubordinate painter but also a dangerous competitor as a *cicerone*.[31]

It is tempting to regard Müller's aggressive attacks against Reiffenstein as acts of self-defence of an artist deeply hurt in his pride and in doing

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[29] 'Fluch und Verwüstung der Kunst, alte klappernde Schlange / Die mit gifftigem Hauch alles umnebelt und sengt / Kunstzerstöhrer, nicht Schüzzer, Pest der edeln nicht Beystand / Leckest du Marck und Bluth derer die du bedrängst / Prahlend nennest du Schild dich, aller die du erwürgest. / Ha! vom Acheron her, hetzte zum heiligen Grund' / Auf der Musen Gefield dich Stolz und bellender, schwarzer / Furien stinckend Gezücht, Haabsucht, Neid und Kaball. // (…) // Auf o Vater Apoll! du selbsten erhabner erlöße / Reiß uns vom ehernen Joch, schlage den Frevel hinab! / Ha! schon rauschet die Senne, hört ihr den Jubel der Nymphen / Heylig! heilig Apoll! hat es dein Bogen vollbracht! / Krümm' dich du Made! wir weinen, weinen bey deiner grube / daß du nun moderst, ha! nein! daß du zu lange gewürgt'. The entire elegy in Paulus 1988, p. 8.

[30] Müller 1996–1998, vol. 1, pp. 130f.: Müller to Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, Rom, 5 February 1789 (my translation). See also his letter to Wilhelm Heinse, 8 June 1789 (Ibidem, p. 133): '[D]ieser Streich wurde mir schon öfters gespielt, daß Leuthe sich nach mir erkundigt, denen mann solch verdamtes Zeugs von mir vorsagte[,] daß sie bald alle Lust mich kennen zu lernen verlohren, hielten Sie aber an[,] so sagte mann Ihnen lieber ich wäre nicht mehr in Rom und dann waren sie desto geschwinder fertig (…)'.

[31] Cf. also Müllers satirical comedy entitled *Das römische Kunstantiquariat* (*The Roman Antiquarian art shop*), in which a certain 'Councillor Kneiffenbein' makes every effort to harm a painter called 'Rellüm' (!) by calling him a 'very bad person' with whom 'no honest man' in Rome would like to have anything to do. For the not yet published text: Sattel-Bernardini 1990, pp. 135–150.

so pass off his polemic criticism as a personal feud. A concluding glance at some letters the young painter Friedrich Bury (1763–1823) sent to Goethe and Duchess Anna Amalia, however, might show that arguments between artists and art agents were not necessarily about mere idiosyncrasies but rather about aesthetics and style.

In Bury's letters, Reiffenstein is mentioned several times. The young painter found the art agent, whom he repeatedly calls an 'old sea lion' ('alter Seelöwe'), 'nothing less than bearable'. He let Goethe know that he felt lucky 'not to have had anything to do with the old man yet since it would have been impossible for [him] to get along with him'.[32] This is a statement Müller could also have made. Still, Bury's disparaging opinion of Reiffenstein seems to be more than just disappointment about commissions he did not obtain. Bury, who was born in 1763, belonged to a generation of artists who started to emancipate themselves from the ideals of a strict neoclassicism. Instead, they developed a passionate, pre-romantic interest in the art of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[33] By contrast, Reiffenstein, born in 1719, always saw himself as the preserver and defender of that classical heritage which his predecessors Anton Raphael Mengs and Winckelmann (both of whom he had known personally) had left him. In his *Italienische Reise* Goethe reports among 'Reiffenstein's repeatedly extolled teachings' that

> you should not immediately address the best but start with the Carracci, the Farnese Gallery in fact. Then you should move on to Raphael and lastly draw the Apollo of Belvedere so often you know it by heart. Then there is not much left to hope and desire.[34]

Among the young artists, however, Reiffenstein's advice was only laughed at. Once he heard these sentences the young painter Johann Georg Schütz for example is said to have had 'such a fit of laughing' that he hardly knew how to conceal it.[35] Yet in his function as an art

[32] Bury 2007, p. 10: Bury to Goethe, Rome, 10 May 1788.

[33] In their full-scale reckoning of Romanticism of 1817 entitled *Neu-Deutsche Religios-Patriotische Kunst* Goethe and Johann Heinrich Meyer explicitly called Bury one of the first young German-Roman artists who developed a passionate interest in the art of the fourteenth and sixteenth century. See Bury 2007, pp. 215–218 and Goethe 1985–1998, vol. 11/2, pp. 319–350, here p. 324.

[34] Goethe 1985–1998, vol. 15, pp. 491f. (my translation).

[35] Goethe 1985–1998, vol. 15, p. 492.

agent Reiffenstein obviously stuck to exactly this aesthetic ideal and only arranged commissions for those artists willing to submit to it.

Shortly after Reiffenstein died on 6 October 1793, Bury wrote a letter to Goethe in which he informed him about the sad incident using once again oddly triumphant words:

> After Mr. Trippel's death the same fate has struck the English landscape painter *More*. And it did not stop there—for the third time we had to go to the pyramid. The victim was the old Councillor Reiffenstein. The procession was not as sad as the ones before, but it was much more extravagant. A haemorrhage brought his life to an end; (…) as it is more probable to find work in Rome now that the streets are open again, this is the moment to make your own fortune. I will inform you about this occasionally, yet I would like to ask your advice to help me.[36]

With Reiffenstein's death, an era that had started thirty years before came to an end. It was in full bloom in the 1770s and early 1780s when Reiffenstein was probably one of the most successful art agents who played a crucial role in the rise of European neoclassicism. At the same time he had built up the already mentioned 'art cartel' together with Hackert and Angelica Kauffmann. Already by the mid-1780s, however, the system had begun to crumble. After Reiffenstein's death those who did not get their fair share during his time tried to make their fortune by acting as their own agents or even trying to take Reiffenstein's place. Among those was Bury, who was able to attain a pension from the English Prince Augustus Frederick, then living in Italy.[37] The same is true for Bury's friend, the *cicerone* Aloys Hirt, who at first tried to succeed Reiffenstein but failed to do so; due to the collapse of Grand Tour tourism he left Italy in 1796 and returned to Germany as a member

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[36] 'Nach dem Tod des Hrn. *Trippel*; hat dasselbe Schiksal den Engländer Landschafts Mahler *More* gedroffen. auch dabey blieb es nicht sondern zum dritten mahl muste die Piramide besucht werden, und das opfer war, der Alte Rath Reiffenstein, der Zug ginge nicht so Traurig als bey den ersteren, aber mit desto mehr Aufwand, ein bluthsturtz brachte ihm seyn ende; (…) da es nun mehr wahrscheinlichkeit hat, daß man in *Rom* etwas zu Arbeiten bekommen kann, indem die Strassen nicht mehr so enge Zusammen geschloßen, so ist nun ein Augenblik, auch in Zukunft ein plätzgen sich suchen zu verschaffen. ich werde Ihnen hierüber zu weihlen nachricht geben, bitte mir aber gütigst so wohl Ihren guten Rath, als Hülfe aus'. Bury 2007, p. 86: Bury to Goethe, 12 October 1793 (my translation). An almost identical description of the burial can be found in Bury's letter to Anna Amalia of 12 October 1793, in which once again the old accusation is made that Reiffenstein made common cause with Angelika Kauffmann and suppressed German artists (Ibidem, p. 85).

[37] For the single stays: Ingamells 1997, pp. 35–38.

of the Berlin academy.[38] Bury, severely threatened in his livelihood by the French occupation of Italy, followed him there in 1799. Another would-be heir to Reiffenstein was Friedrich Müller, who for some years worked as an art agent for Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria. But within a short time he too was accused of giving preference to himself rather than to his court and was eventually replaced by the young and aspiring Johann Martin Wagner.[39]

These three examples among others show that Reiffenstein's death did indeed mark not only personally but also in a much more fundamental sense the end of an era. After the French Revolution, the occupation of Italy by the troops of the young republic and Napoleon's art theft, nothing was the same. The art patronage of the ancient regime, which had relied heavily on the work of agents, was gradually replaced by the modern art trade. Instead of Rome, Paris and London became the new capitals of European art.

Reiffenstein was dead, yet his former victims were still deeply embittered. When the architect Friedrich Weinbrenner started to write his memoirs in 1817 he, of course, also remembered Reiffenstein, to whom he had been recommended in 1792. Because Reiffenstein 'favored mainly Italian artists', the young architect had soon broken ties with him.[40] The detailed and impious description of Reiffenstein's burial (Fig. 21) given by Weinbrenner in his *Denkwürdigkeiten* shows that even after more than twenty years the disappointment with the famous art agent had not faded:

> At two (two hours after sunset) the procession began. There were four in each carriage and in a row they slowly drove to Cajus Cestius where the dead body had already arrived in another carriage. The coffin was put down at the gate shutting the grounds of Cajus Cestius on the left of the graveyard and in front of Monte Testaccio where most Roman families meet every Thursday in October and enjoy a glass of wine. Then the soldiers formed a circle inside the gate so as to ward off the crowds of people. There were a lot of people who had enjoyed themselves at Monte

[38] Müller 2004; Sedlarz/Johannsen 2004.

[39] When being asked by the crown prince what he thought of Müller's doings as an art agent, the painter Georg von Dillis said in 1808: 'I actually find Müller a reserved, false, differently acting and talking, changeable person far removed from a straight Bavarian'. Sattel Bernardini/ Schlegel 1986, p. 36 (my translation). Cf. Sattel Bernardini 1993; Schlegel 1987.

[40] Weinbrenner 1958, pp. 86f.

> Testaccio and who wanted to pass by the soldiers. Those belonging to the funeral procession were pulled into the crowd and tried to get to the grave. But the guards who did not know us as we had left the funeral procession in front of the gate did not let us enter. So there was a big fuss about entering and leaving the gate in which the Italian torchbearers put out most of their torches that had cost a ducat each regarding them as their property and therefore wanting to save as much of them as possible. In addition, many a compatriot was ashamed to assist a Protestant funeral procession which is why they did not want to show their faces in the torches' light. When finally we had passed the coffin and arduously got inside the circle of soldiers together with some Romans who had lost their way in trying to get out, the coffin was finally taken on the shoulders of special bearers and we began to make our some hundred steps to the grave. When the procession had moved a little we met another papal guard watching over a powder magazine in the district that had only been put there a short time before. They turned back the procession and now everybody screamed: (*a mano dritta*) Right! Since most lights were put out and the foreigners did not have torches either, the procession finally arrived with great noise at the *osterie* at Monte Testaccio. Here again, everybody screamed: (*a mano manica*) Left! This way the procession was severely confused due to the dark night and the people's noise. But finally we did arrive at the city wall near Monte Testaccio. We had to look for the grave for almost over an hour. Meanwhile, the bearers had thrown down the dead body from their shoulders several times and a lot of people had tripped over each other on the uneven ground. At the grave (which the foreigners could hardly approach because the Italians who had an invitation to the funeral were pushing forward with their relatives) the current councillor of state in Berlin Uden made a very moving and appropriate speech in German. Then we left the grave, got back in our carriages and drove home'.[41]

One's own funeral as a farce: this obviously has to be the price one has to pay for having been a successful and therefore envied art agent during one's lifetime. Thus, the former 'Thäter und Handanleger' ('perpetrator and one who lends a hand', two terms which Reiffenstein once used to describe himself), who had left so many victims behind, eventually became a victim himself.[42]

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[41] Weinbrenner 1958, pp. 88f (my translation).

[42] Reiffenstein to J. L. von Negelein, 1 August 1791. I would like to thank Christoph Frank for pointing out to me this unpublished letter kept in the Freies Deutsches Hochstift/Frankfurt am Main.

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